

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING #3

AUGUST 18, 2011

NOTICE
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the East Side Highway Steering Committee will hold a Public Information Meeting on Thursday, August 18, 2011 at the Normal Community High School Auditorium at 3900 East Raab Road in Normal, Illinois. The meeting will be held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to update the public on the alternative and evaluation process to date, and to present preliminary corridors that are currently being studied. A brief presentation will be made at 6:15 PM and again at 7:15 PM. The presentations will be identical. The remainder of the meeting will be open-house format with opportunity to review exhibits. Project team staff will be available for discussion and questions.

A map of the remaining corridors will be available on the project website (<http://www.eastsidehighway.com>) prior to the meeting. Persons with disability requiring special accommodations should contact Clark Dietz, Inc. (217-373-8900) to advise of planned attendance and needed accommodations.

WELCOME!



DATE Thursday, August 18, 2011

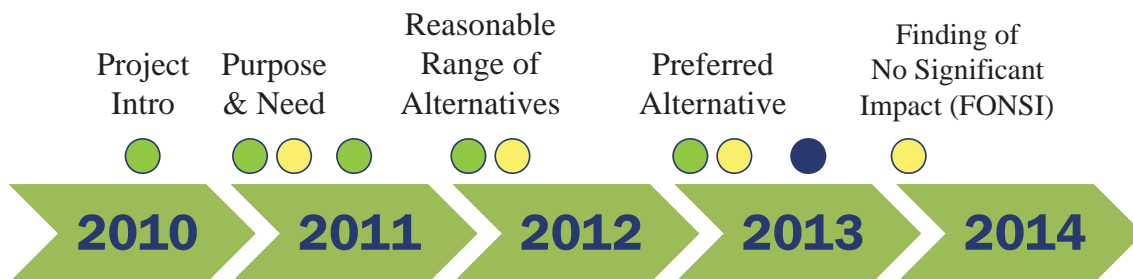
AGENDA An identical, brief presentation will be given at the following times:

6:15 p.m.

7:15 p.m.

Purpose
The purpose of the meeting is to present the alternative development and evaluation process to date.

TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

The McLean County population/employment forecast is multi-faceted:

- Based on numerous information sources and historical trends (densities, access, job centers).
- Done in conjunction with local regional planning information and insights.
- Fortunate in having access to the most-recent, detailed U.S. Census.
- Aided by GIS and advanced aerial observation.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

The Socio-Economic forecast is:

- An independent forecast by ACG, with input from MCRPC.
- Is corroborated by Woods & Poole for the County forecast total.
- W&P is the primary source for State of Illinois and U.S. forecasts at the county level.
- As such, it is a locally-generated forecast with national factors to permit comparisons.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

ACG continues to monitor various sources to temper or corroborate its forecasts:

- A recent IHS Global Insight study estimates return to pre-recession growth.
- State of Illinois Employment Security (monthly data shows relative strength).



POPULATION CHANGE

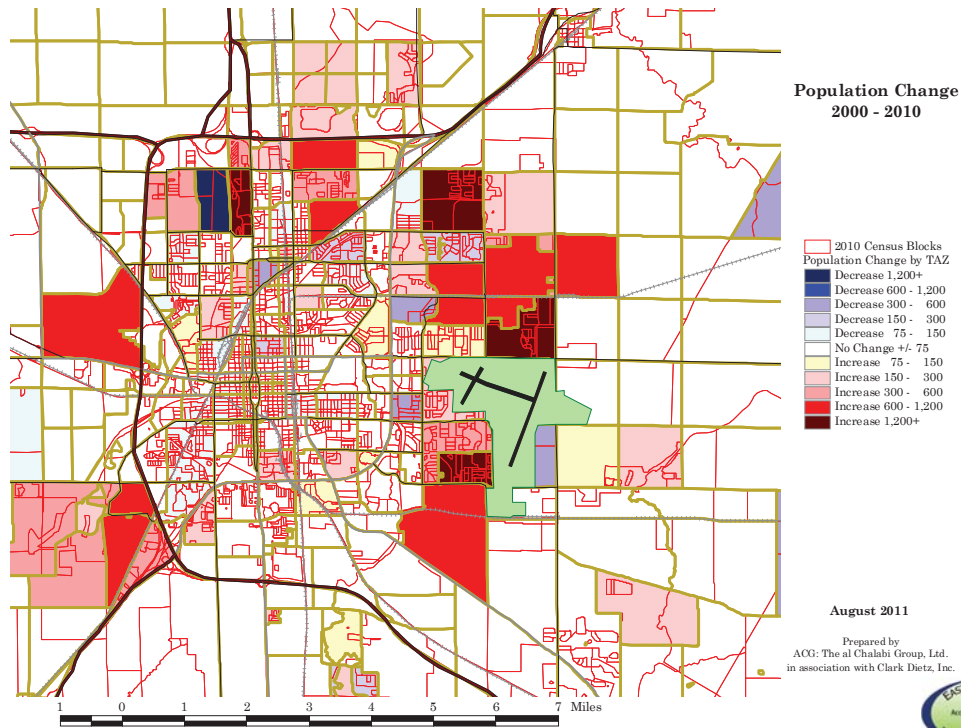
McLean County Population Change 5-Year and 10-Year Growth

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>%</u>
1990	129,178	-	-
1995	140,495	11,317	8.8
2000	150,433	9,938	7.1
1990 – 2000	-	21,255	16.5
2005	159,013	8,580	5.4
2010	169,572	10,559	6.6
2000 - 2010	-	19,139	12.7

Source: U.S. Census: 2000 and 2010 Redistricting Files



POPULATION CHANGE 2000-2010

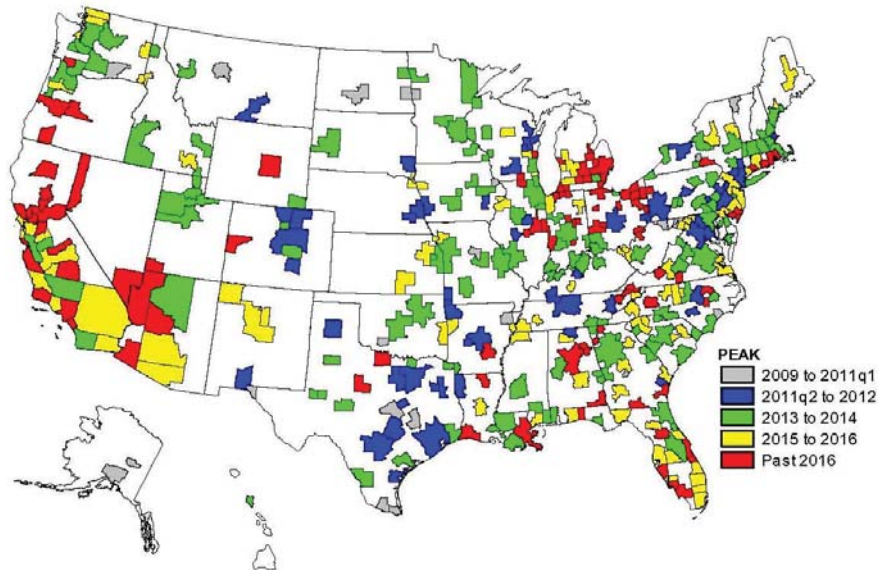


EMPLOYMENT CHANGE

- McLean County employment has grown at a healthy pace.
- Between 1985 and 2000, it grew from 65,709 to 108,806 jobs – a 65.6 percent growth.
- Growth continued, to 115,179 jobs in 2005, (and grew through 2007).
- The recession caused a loss of jobs, to 109,900, in 2010.
- National forecasters expect McLean County to rebound quickly.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

FIGURE 6: METROPOLITAN AREAS' RETURN-TO-PEAK EMPLOYMENT

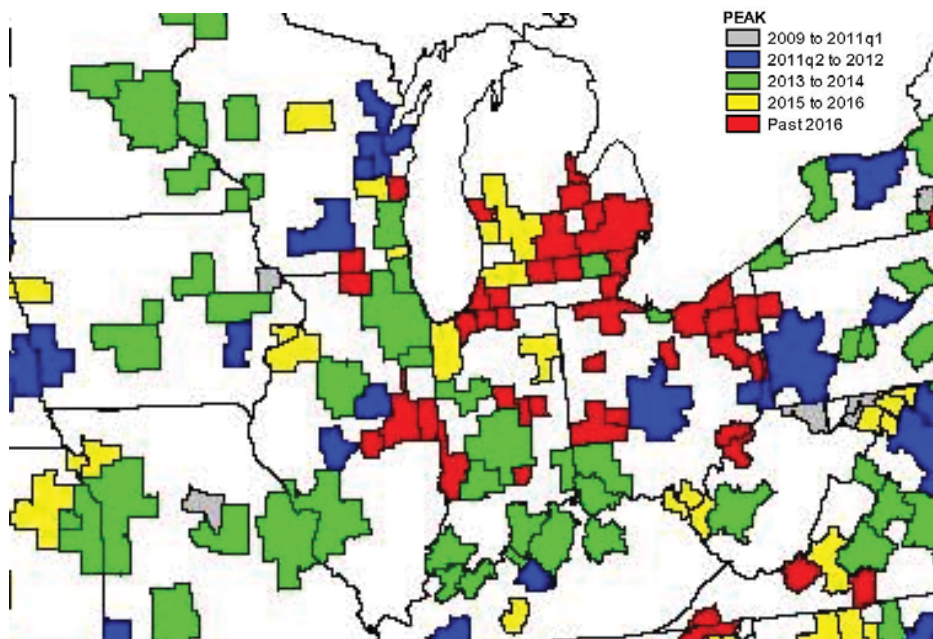


Source: IHS Global Insight, [U.S. Metro Economies: GMP and Employment Forecasts](#), Prepared for U.S. Conference of Mayors and The Council for the New American City, June 2011



SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

Metropolitan Areas; Illinois Detail

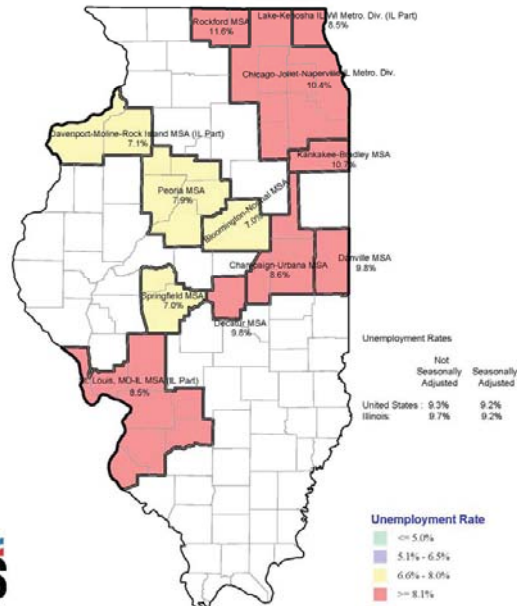


Detail from IHS Global Insight, OpCit.

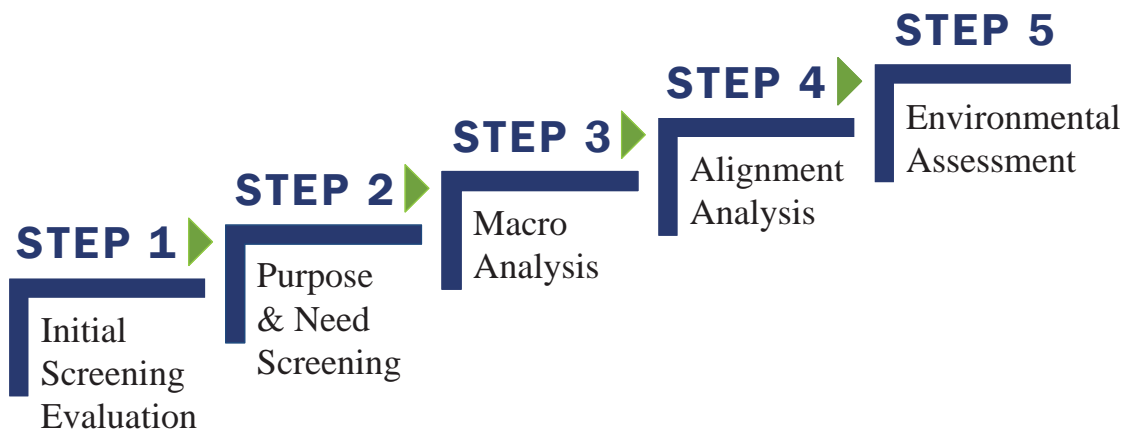


SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

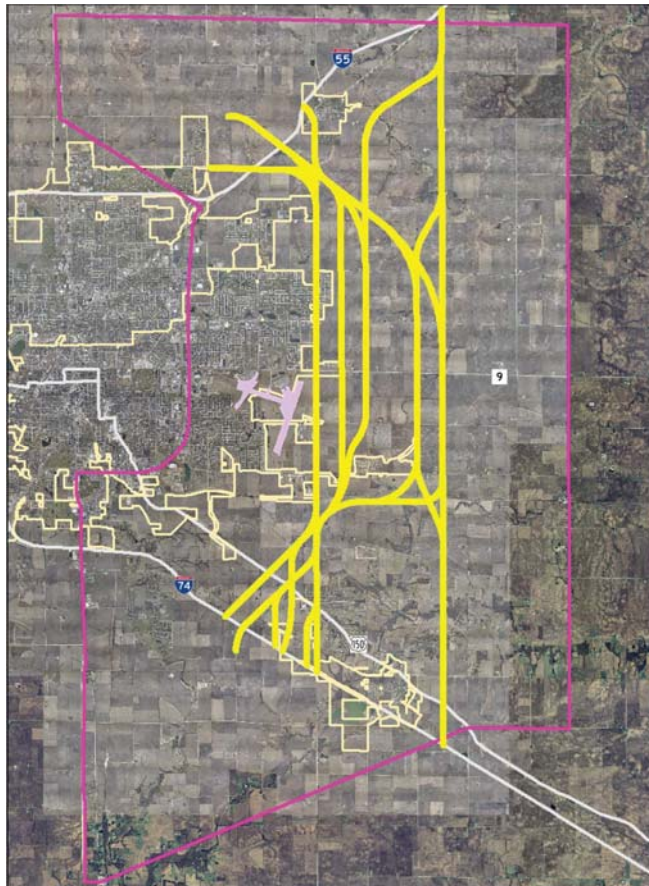
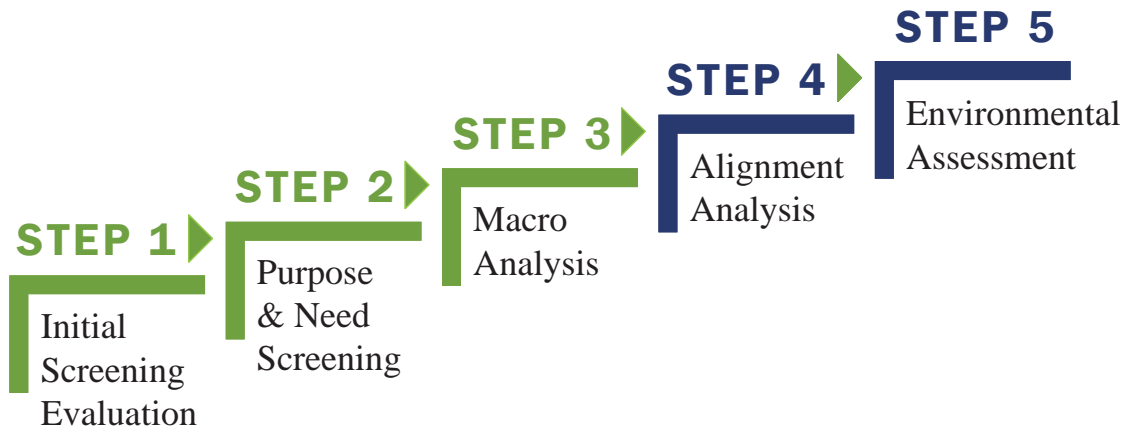
Illinois Unemployment Rate by Metropolitan Statistical Areas
 June, 2011 - Not Seasonally Adjusted
 IL Dept. of Employment Security, Economic Information & Analysis Division



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



TSM/TDM ALTERNATIVE

TSM Strategy Examples:

- Spot Geometric Changes to Streets and Intersections
- Signal Timing Adjustments
- Expanded Transit Routes/Ease of Transfer
- Bicycle Lanes



TSM/TDM ALTERNATIVE

TDM Strategy Examples:

- Integrated Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Alternative Work Times
- Parking Regulations
- Route Coordination Among Agencies

Appropriate strategies are currently under development & consideration. Can be part of corridor solutions.



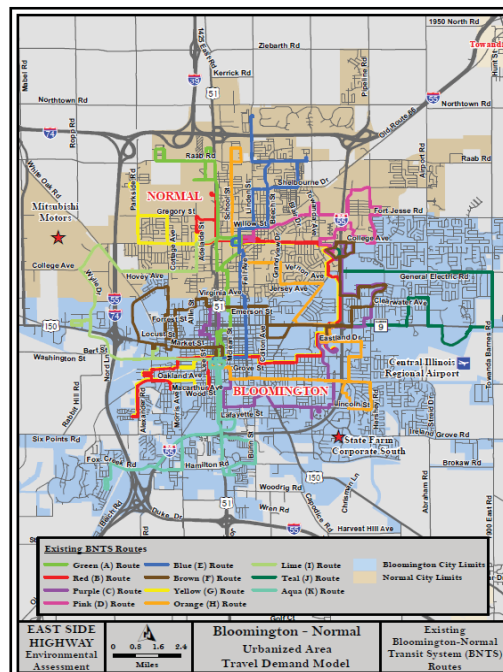
ALTERNATIVES



TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE

Existing Service

- 11 fixed local bus routes
- SHOW BUS
- 5,000 riders/day
- Limited east side service
- Intercity bus (Greyhound, Burlington Trailways & Peoria Charter Coach)
- Passenger rail (Amtrak)
- **Less than 1% of all trips is by transit**



TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE

Future Plans

- Normal Multimodal Transportation Center UNDER CONSTRUCTION
- Expansion of local bus system
- High speed rail (Chicago to St. Louis)
- Potential commuter rail service between Peoria and Bloomington-Normal



TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE

Analysis

2035 Unmet Demand

50,000 local trips in Study Area = 10 Times Existing Transit Ridership

Regional Transit Vision

Multi-Modal Corridors (e.g., Main Street)

Expanded Local Bus System

Serve Existing/Future Development Patterns

Lower densities on east side

Premium Transit (Light Rail, Commuter Rail) Not Viable



TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE

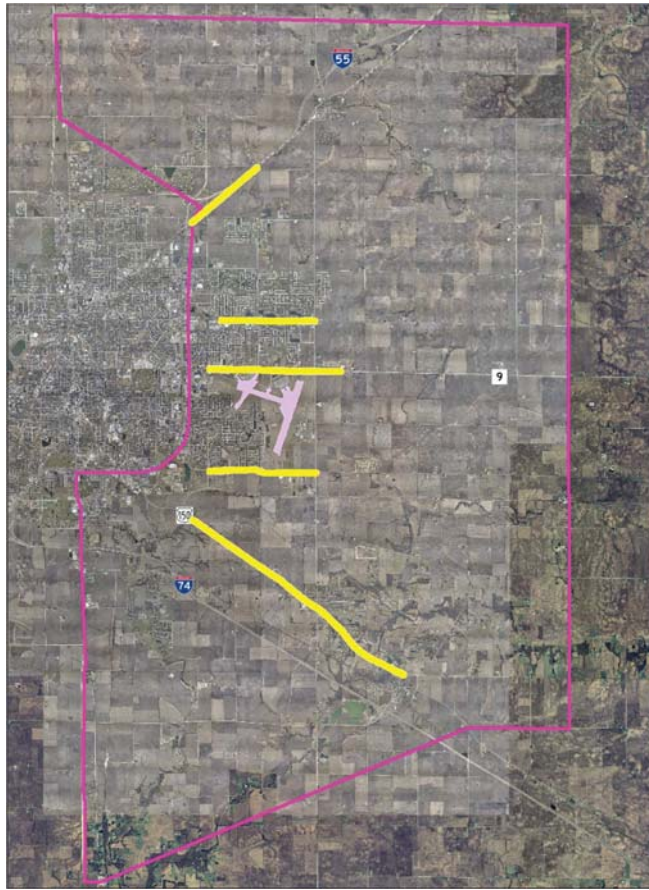
Conclusions

- Transit alone won't meet Purpose and Need
- Transit alone is not the solution, but could be part of a multi-modal corridor
- Enhanced Bus in corridor may be viable



ALTERNATIVES





ALTERNATIVES

**Transportation
Systems
Management/
Travel Demand
Management**

**Transit
Alternative**

**East-West
Alternative**

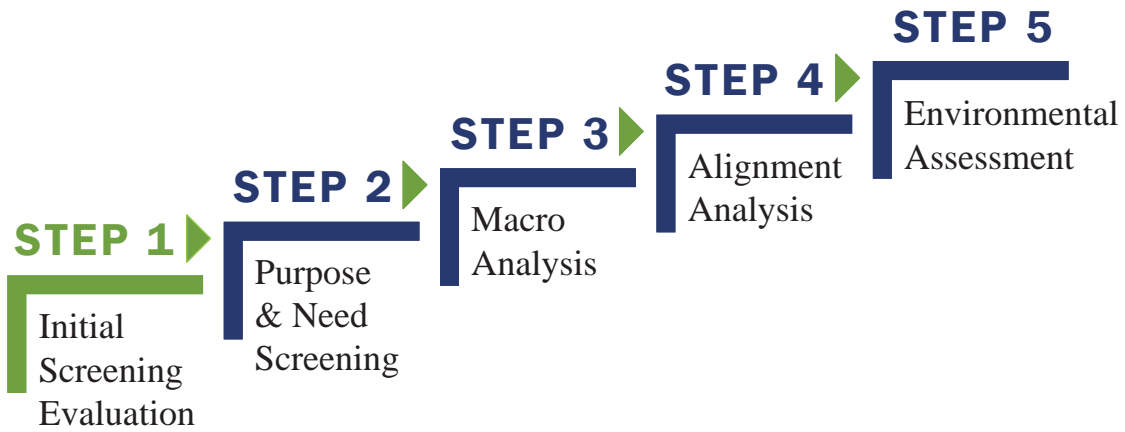
**No-Build
Alternative**

INITIAL SCREENING CRITERIA

1. Does the alternative directly impact State/Federally protected areas?
2. Does the alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport?
3. Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (follows IDOT Community Impact Assessment)



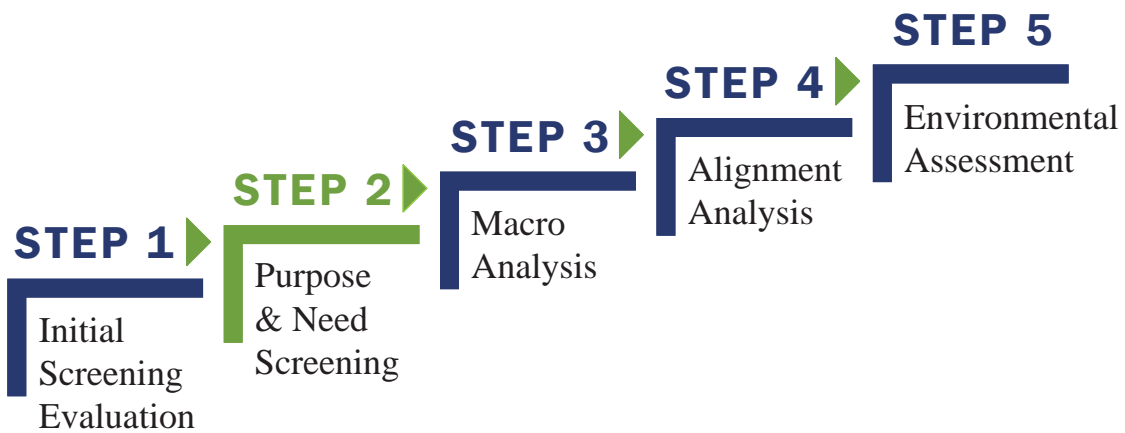
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



116

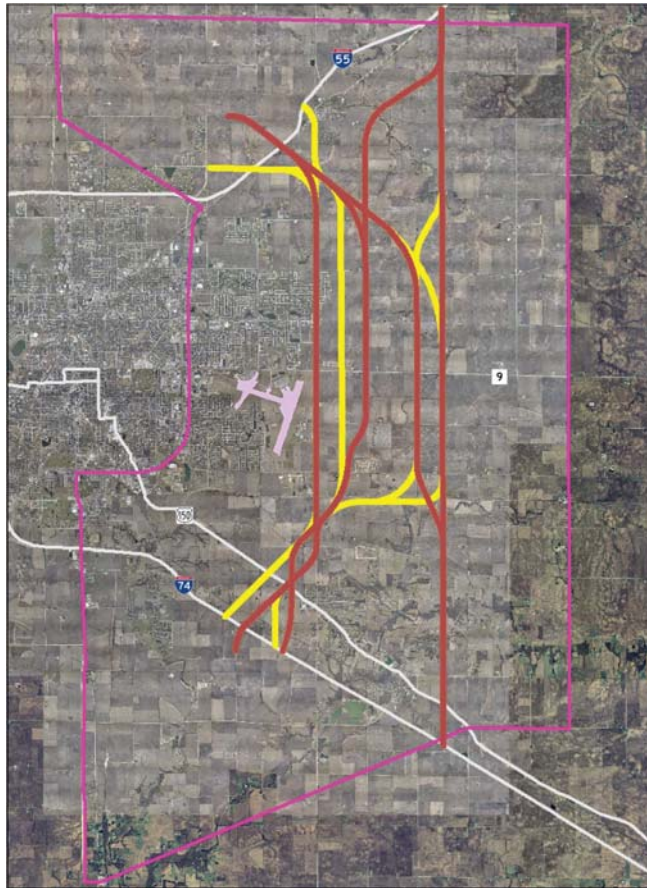


ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



116 → 80





PURPOSE & NEED SCREENING

METRICS

Accommodate Managed Growth

Is/does the alternative:

- compatible with adopted land use plans?
- restrict/reduce opportunities for uncontrolled, sporadic, or leapfrog development?

Mobility

Does the alternative:

- reduce congestion in the study area?
- improve N-S travel efficiencies?
- improve E-W travel efficiencies?

Access

Does the alternative:

- improve travel efficiency to the interstate system?
- provide N-S connectivity?
- provide E-W connectivity?



PURPOSE & NEED SCREENING

METRICS

Accommodate
Managed Growth

Area between 2035 Land
Use Plan and Alternative

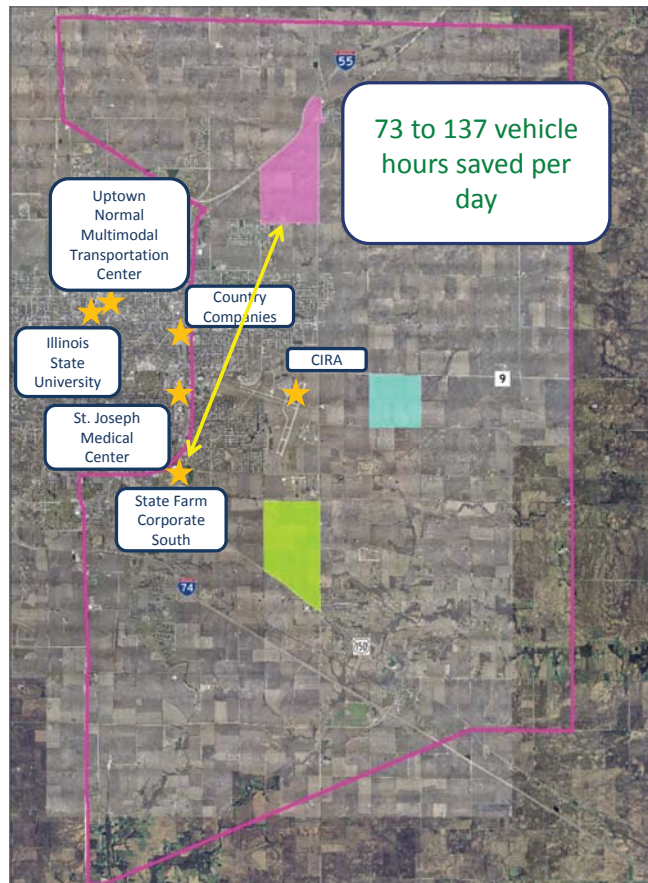
Volume To
Capacity Ratio
(v/c)

% Decrease of
Congested Roadways

Travel Time
Savings
(to/from Travel
Generator)

- Travel Pairs
- Cumulative/Network

tem?

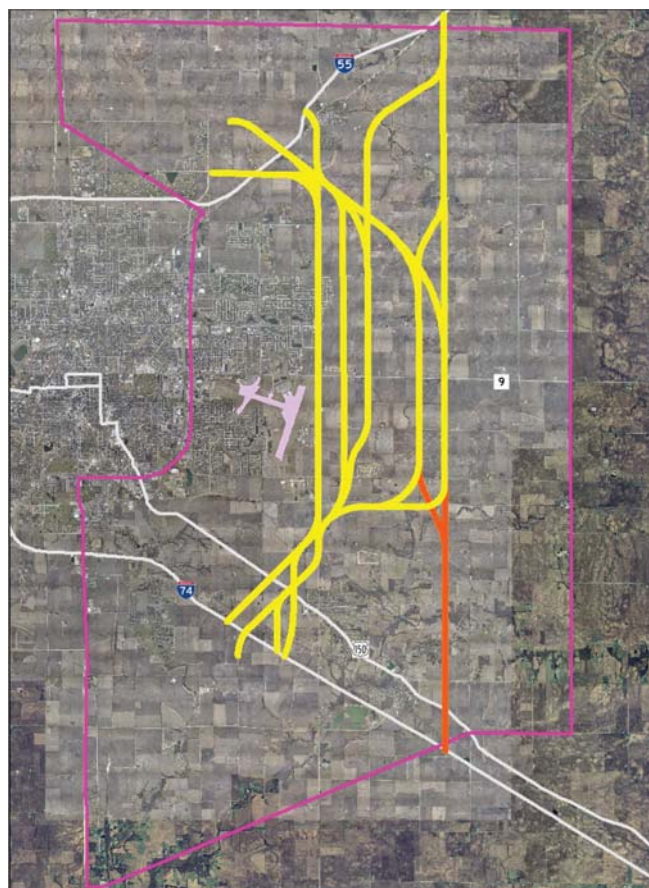


TRAVEL TIME SAVINGS

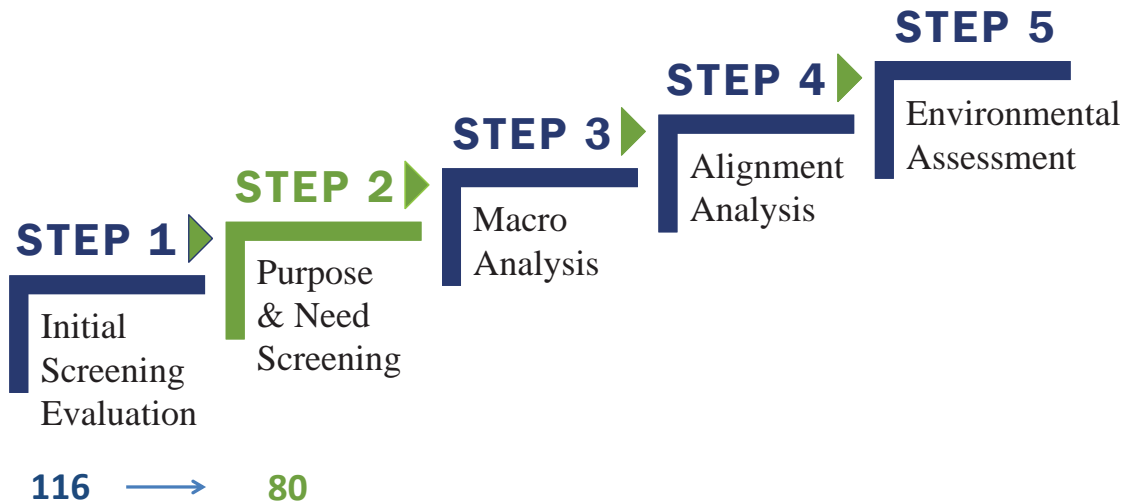
Cumulative: 200 to 600 vehicle hours saved per day

Network-Wide: 3,000 to 5,000 vehicle hours saved per day

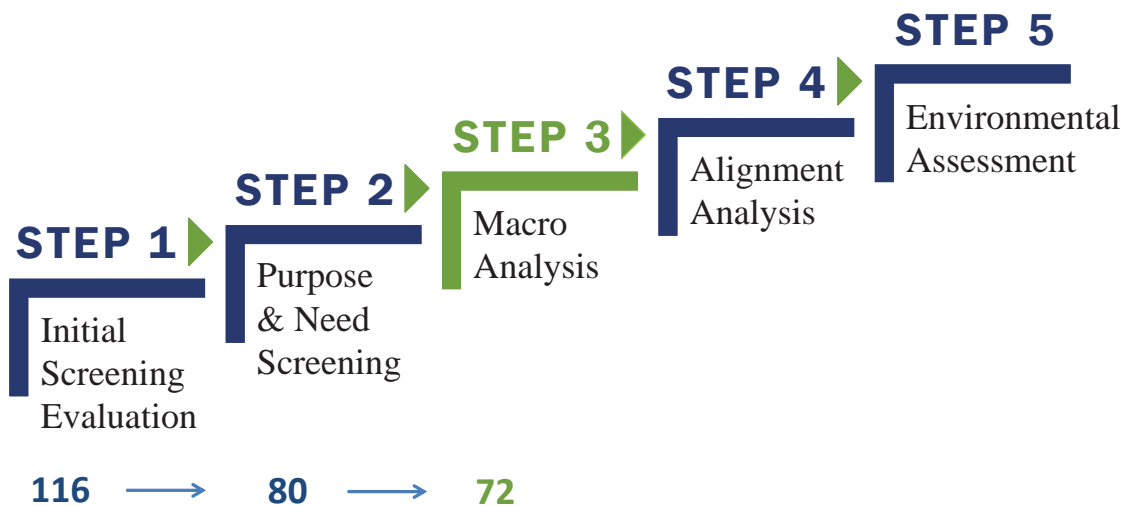
Vehicle hours vary based on alternative



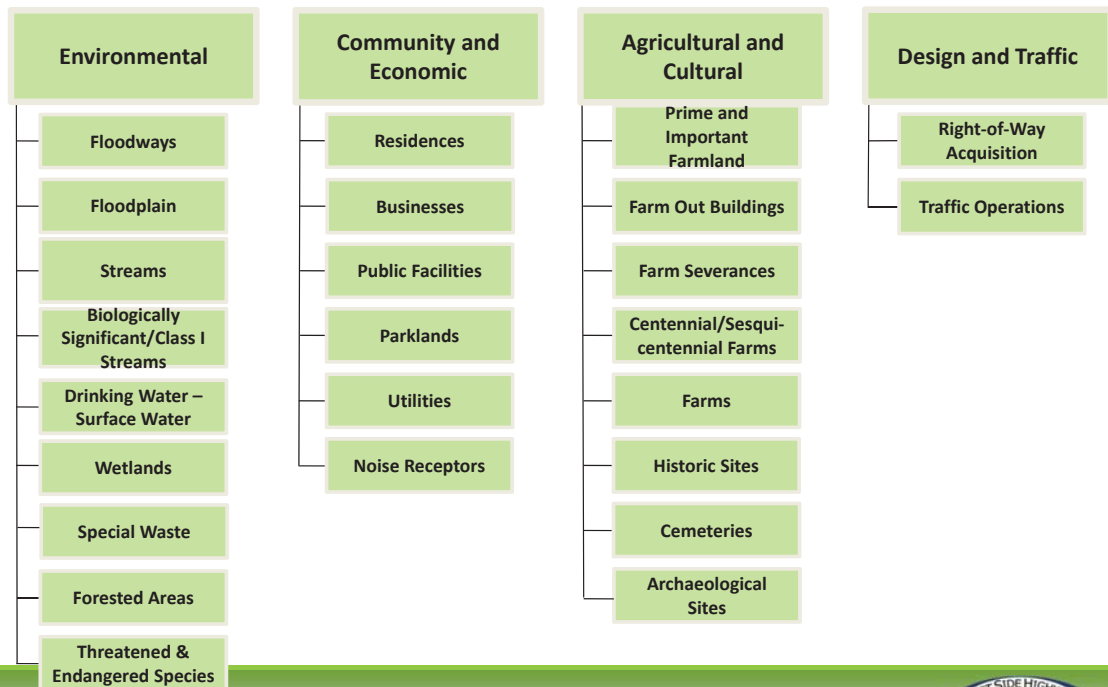
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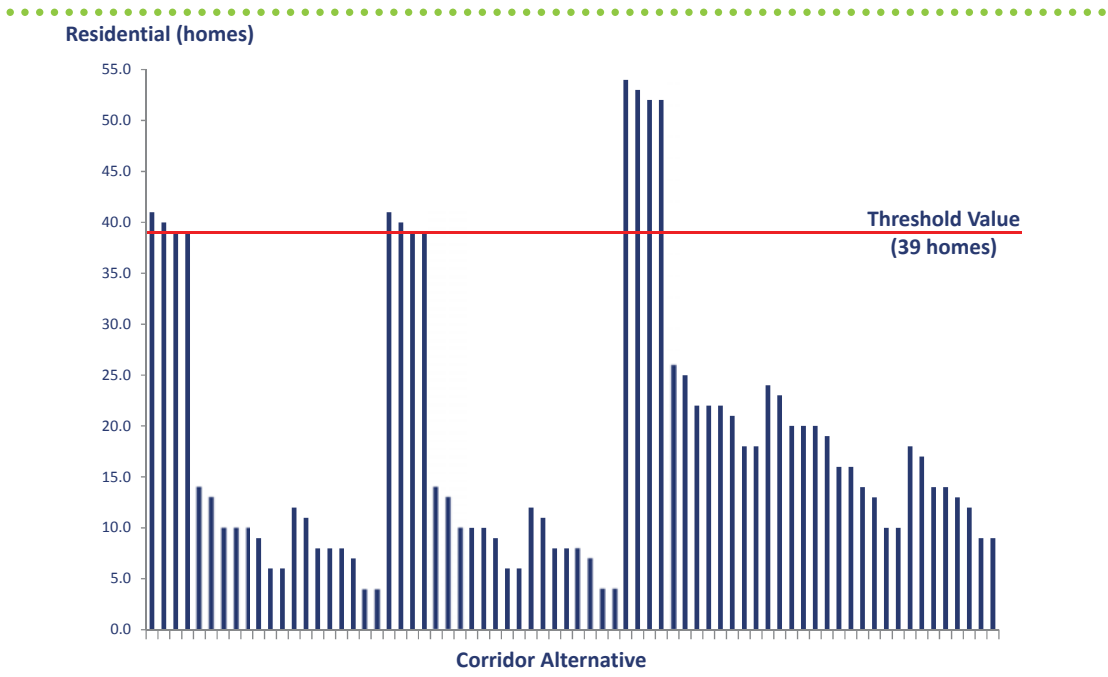
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



RESOURCES

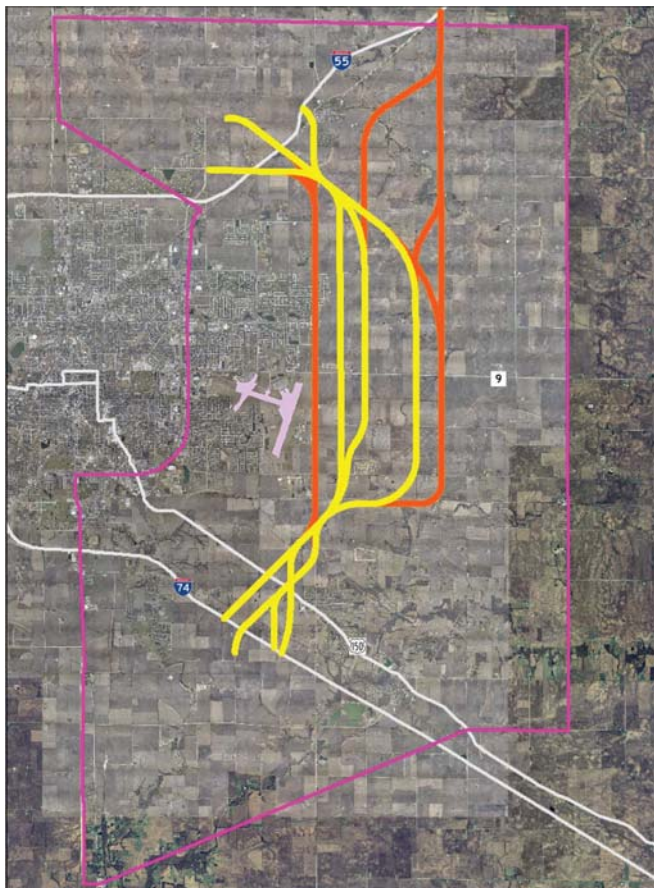
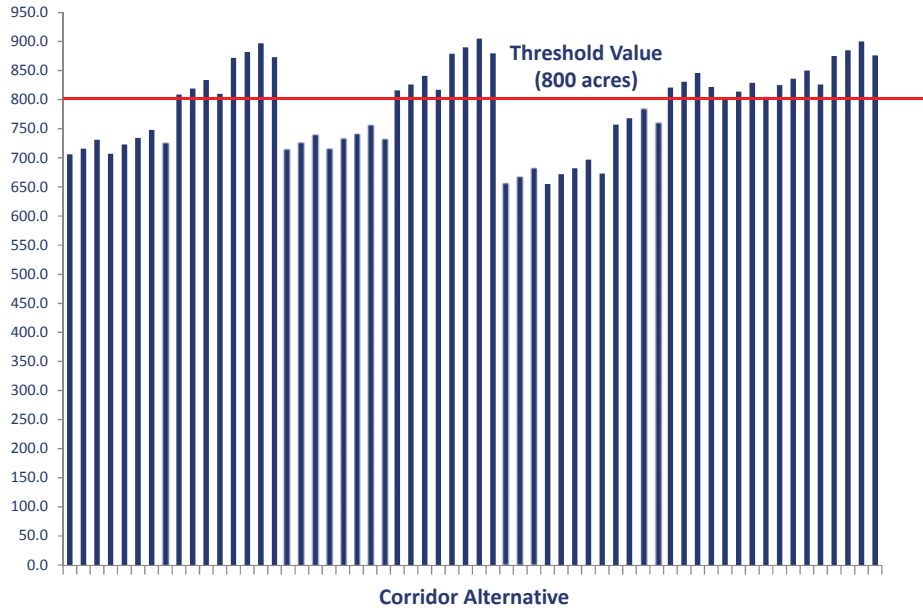


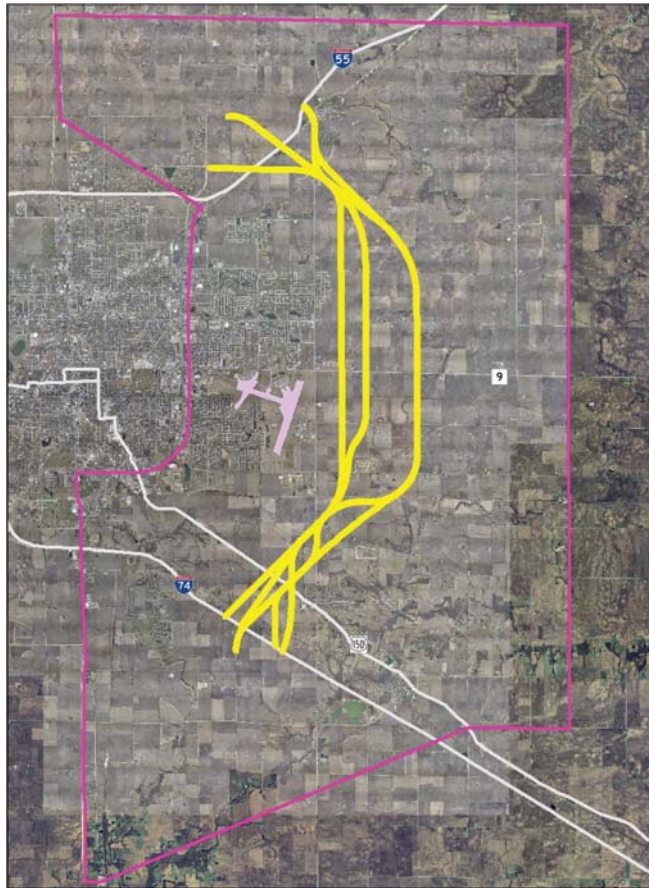
Macro Analysis Screening



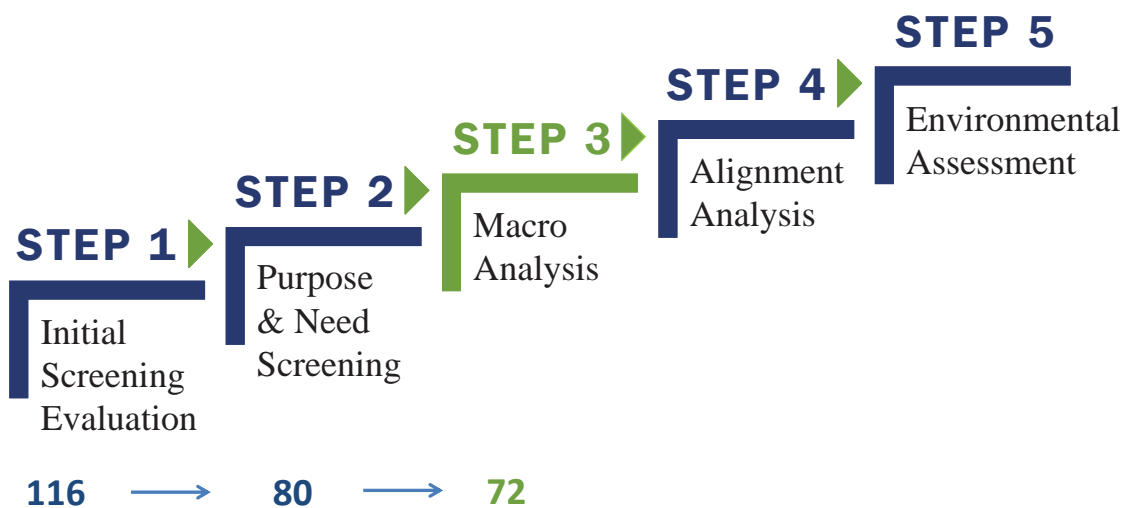
Macro Analysis Screening

Prime and Important Farmland (acres)

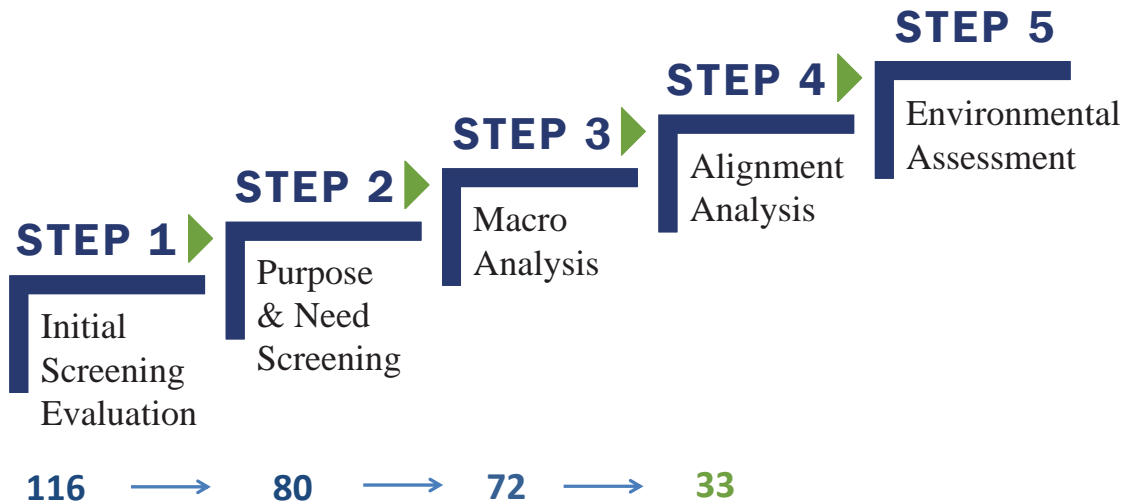




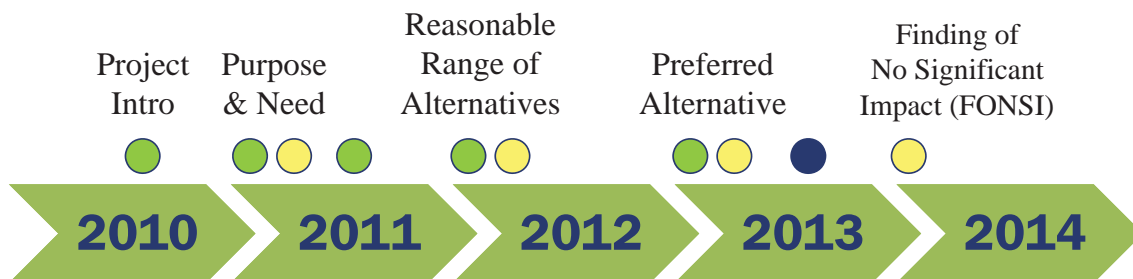
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



CONTACT US

Website: www.eastsidehighway.com

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Phone: (217) 373-8901



WELCOME!



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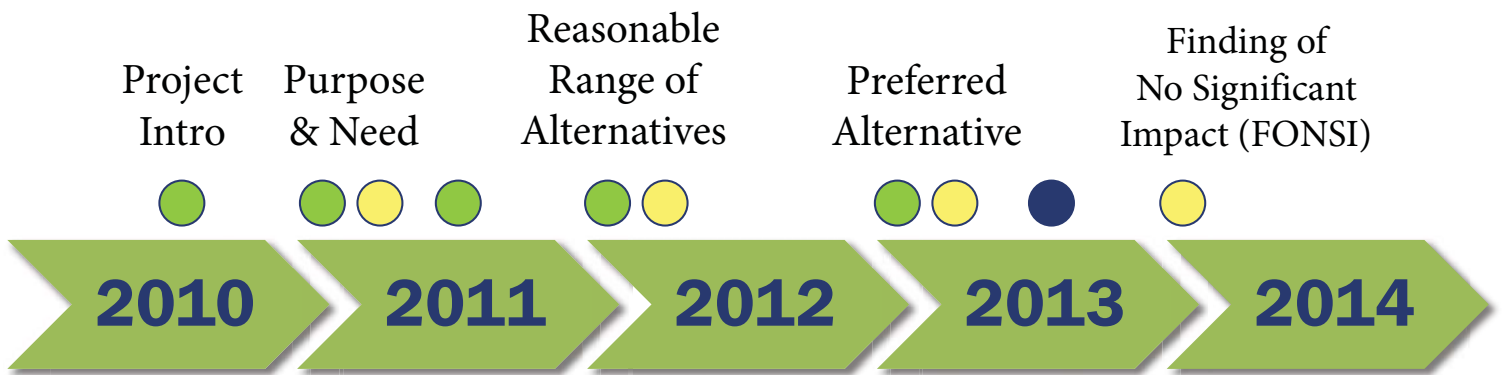
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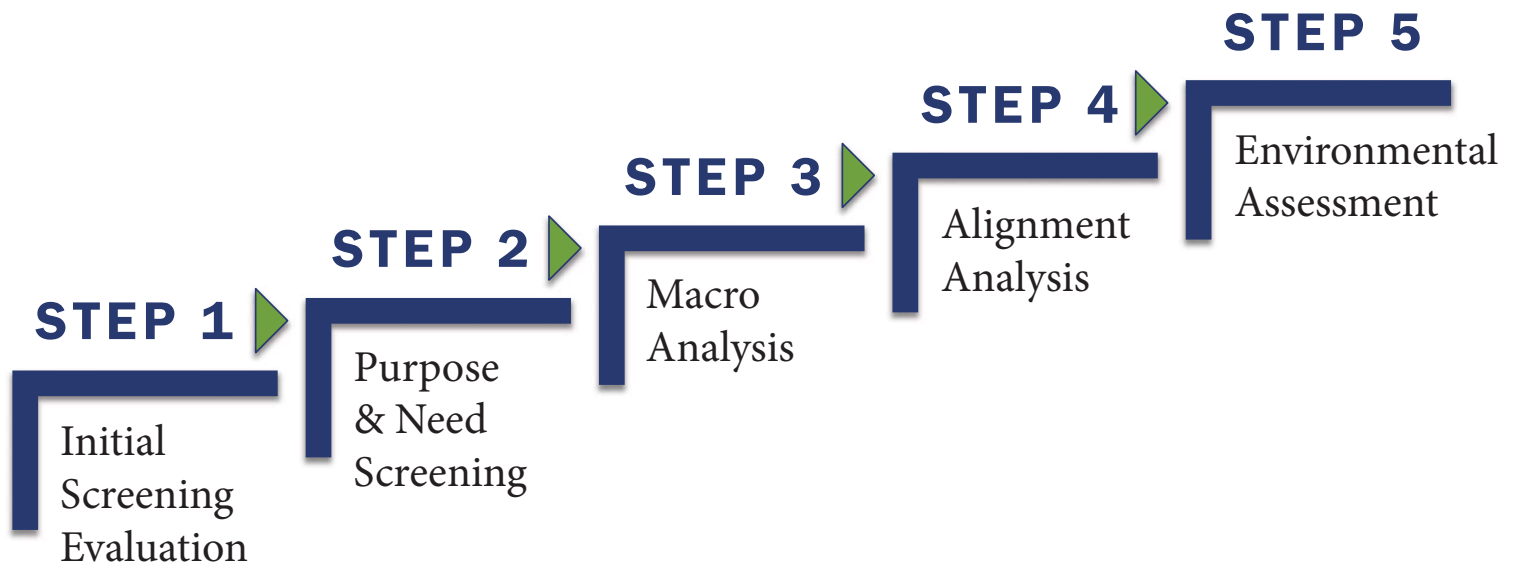
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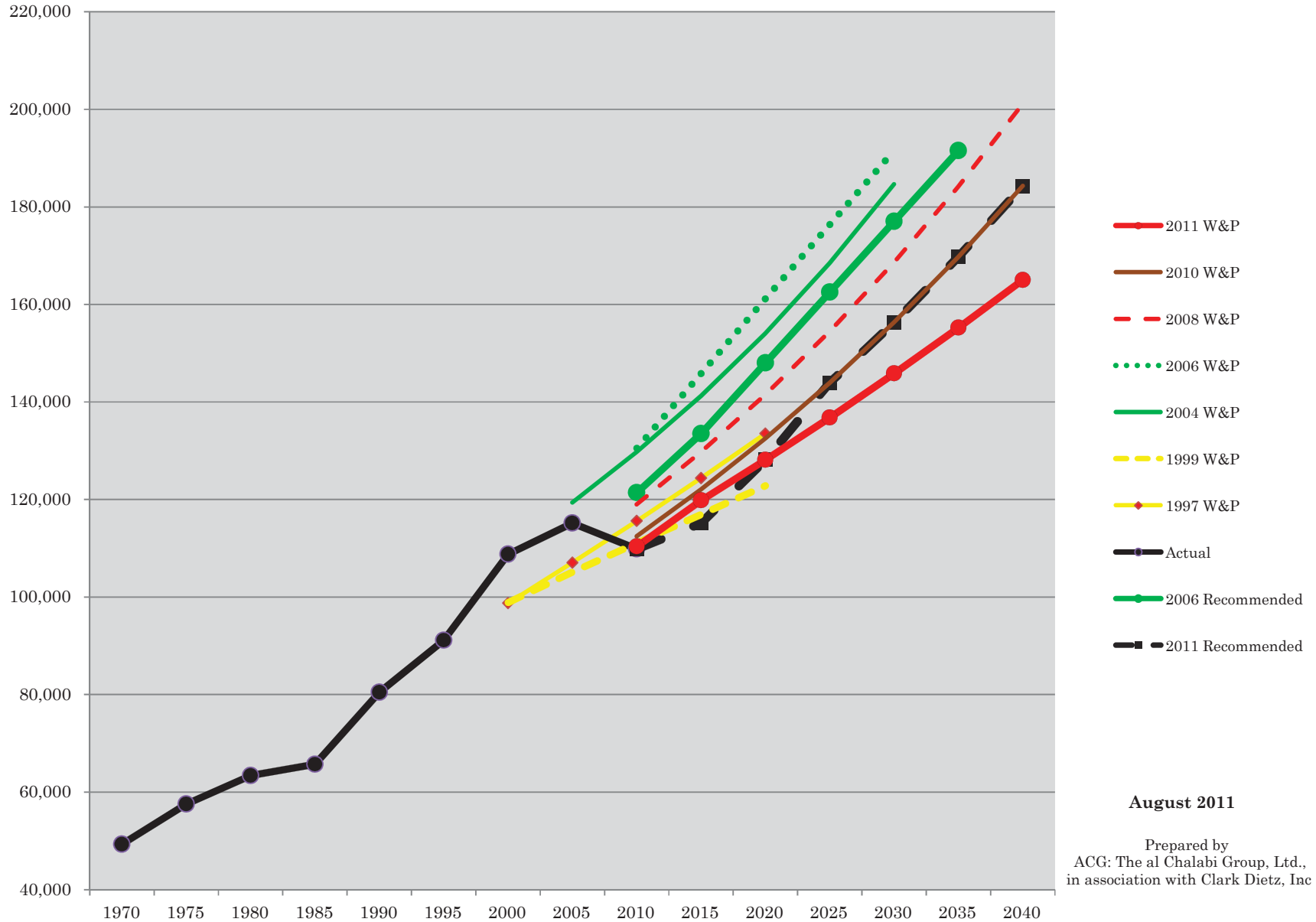
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORECASTS AND UPDATE



McLean County - Employment Trends and Forecasts



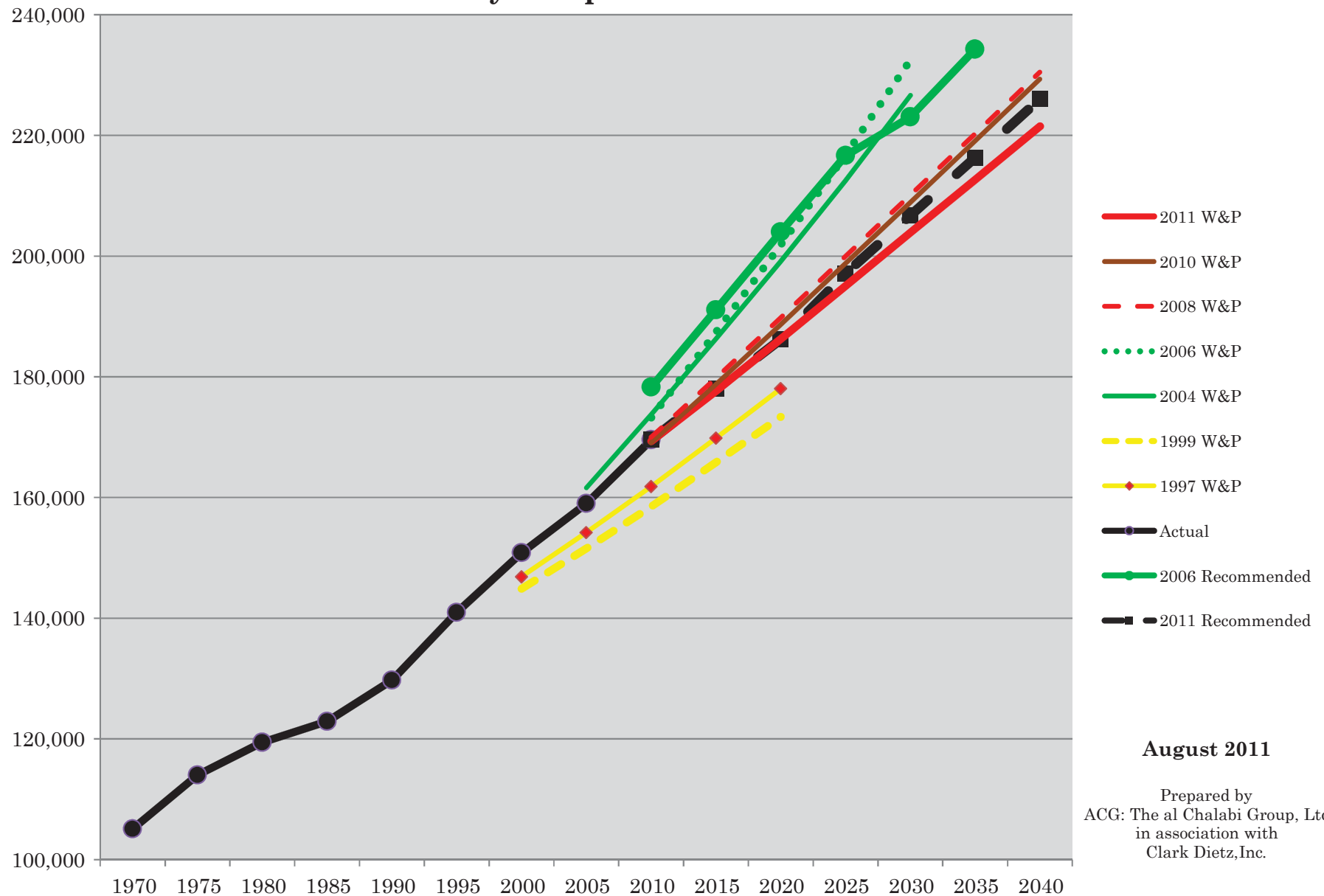
August 2011

Prepared by
ACG: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd.,
in association with Clark Dietz, Inc

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORECASTS AND UPDATE



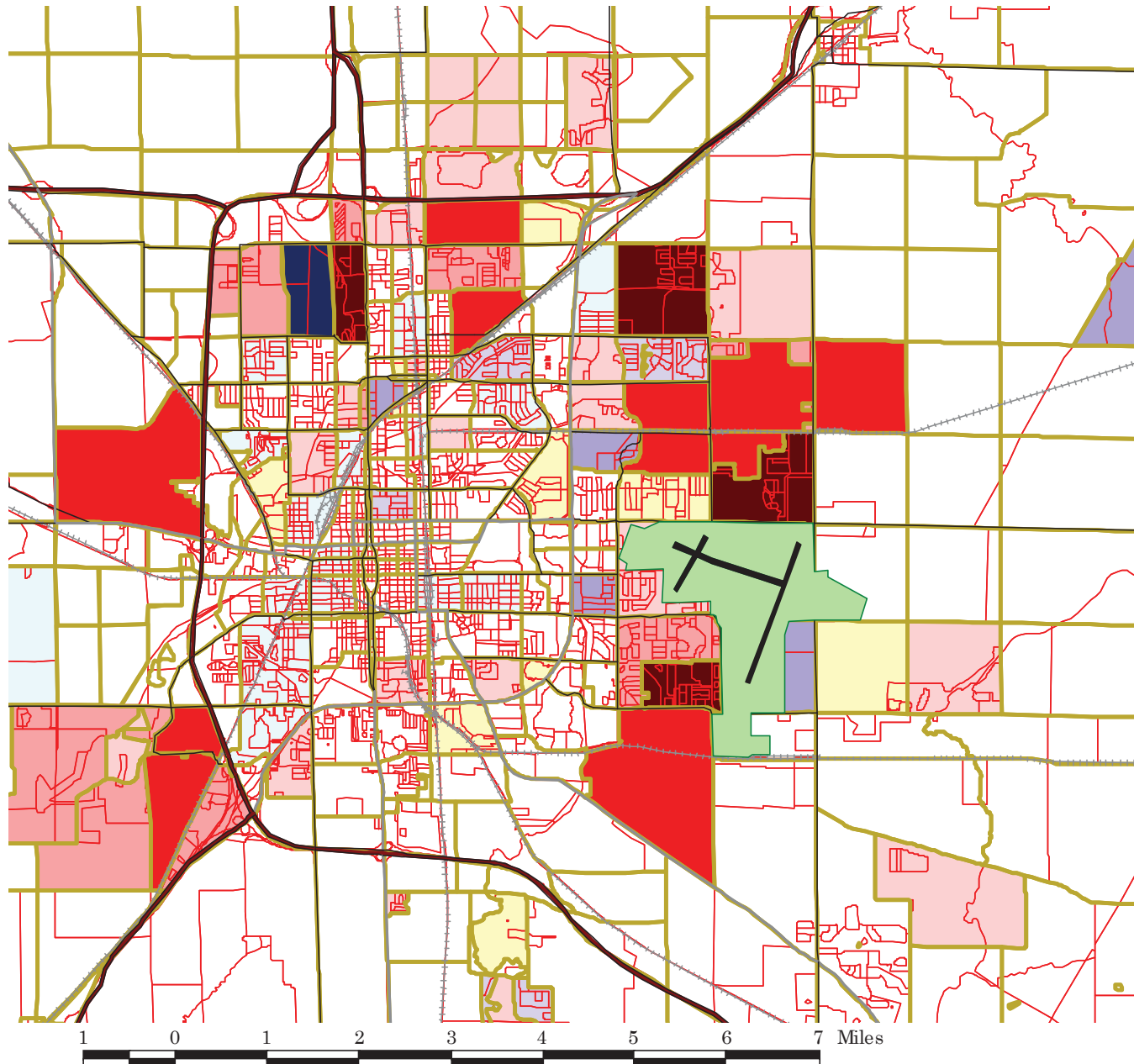
McLean County - Population Trends and Forecasts



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POPULATION CHANGE 2000-2010



Population Change
2000 - 2010

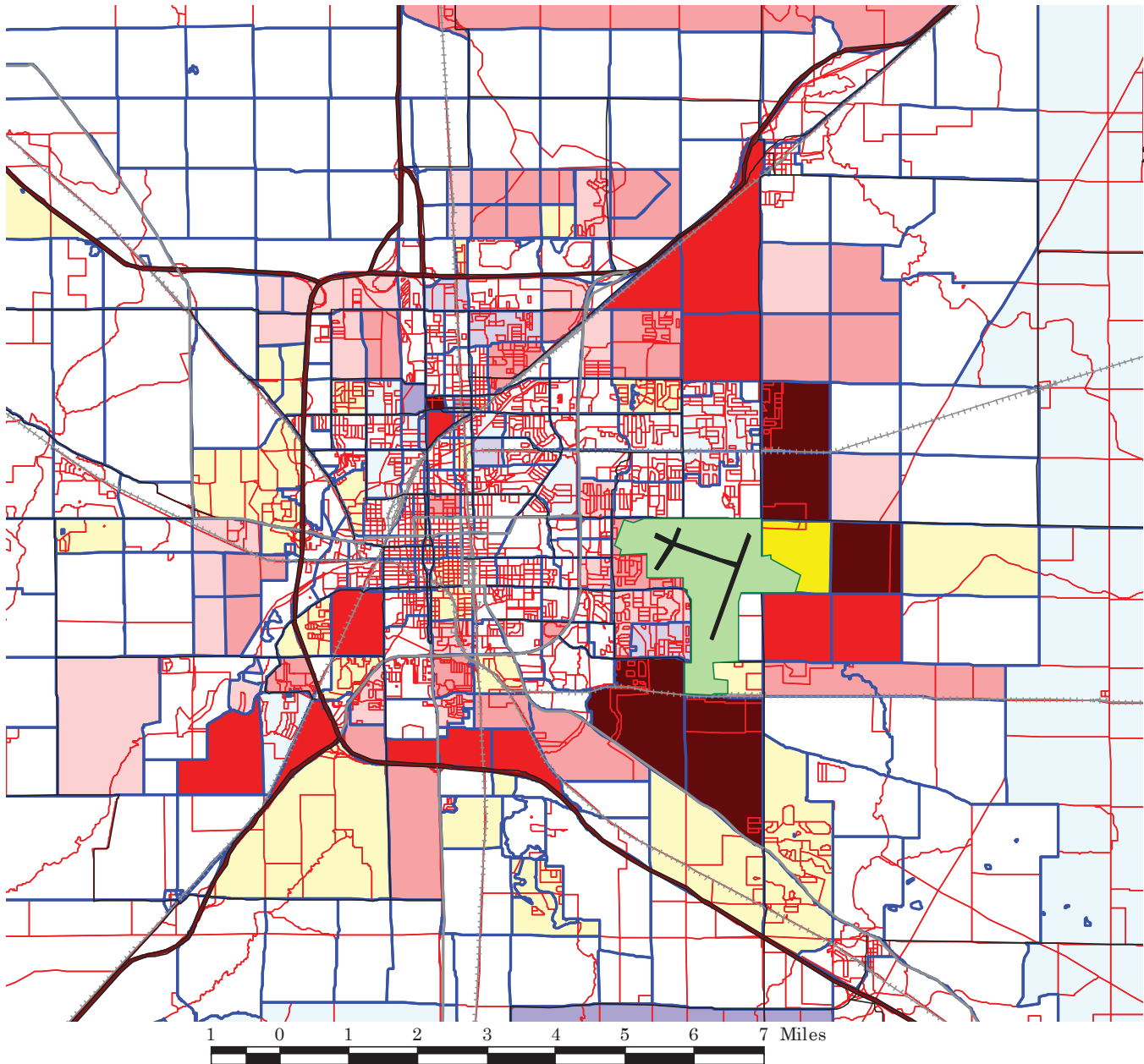
- 2010 Census Blocks
Population Change by TAZ
- Decrease 1,200+
 - Decrease 600 - 1,200
 - Decrease 300 - 600
 - Decrease 150 - 300
 - Decrease 75 - 150
 - No Change +/- 75
 - Increase 75 - 150
 - Increase 150 - 300
 - Increase 300 - 600
 - Increase 600 - 1,200
 - Increase 1,200+

August 2011

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POPULATION CHANGE 2010-2035



**Population Change
2010 - 2035
2011 (EA) Preliminary**

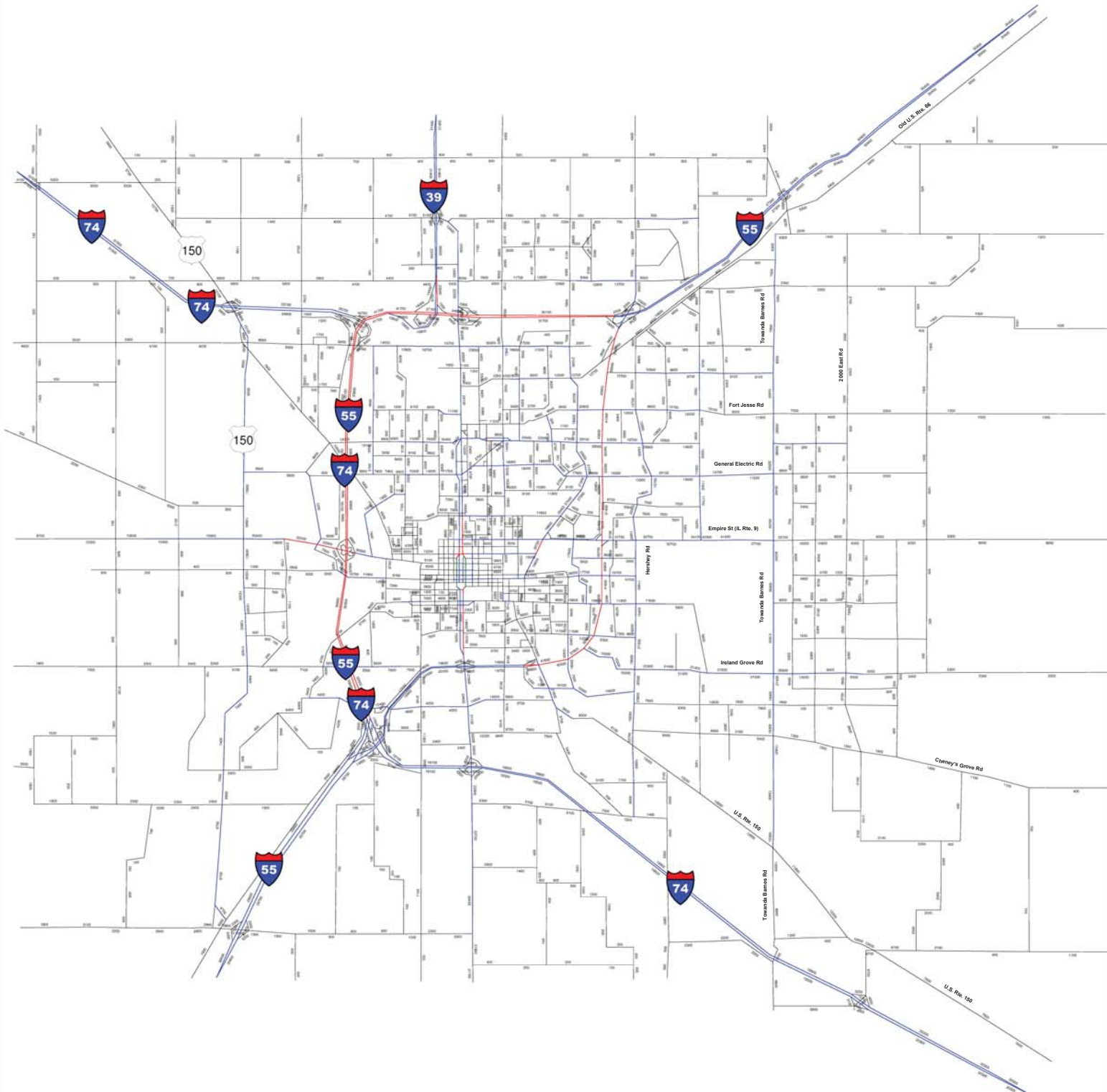
- 2010 Census Blocks
- Population Change by TAZ
- Decrease 1,200+
- Decrease 600 - 1,200
- Decrease 300 - 600
- Decrease 150 - 300
- Decrease 75 - 150
- No Change +/- 75
- Increase 75 - 150
- Increase 150 - 300
- Increase 300 - 600
- Increase 600 - 1,200
- Increase 1,200+

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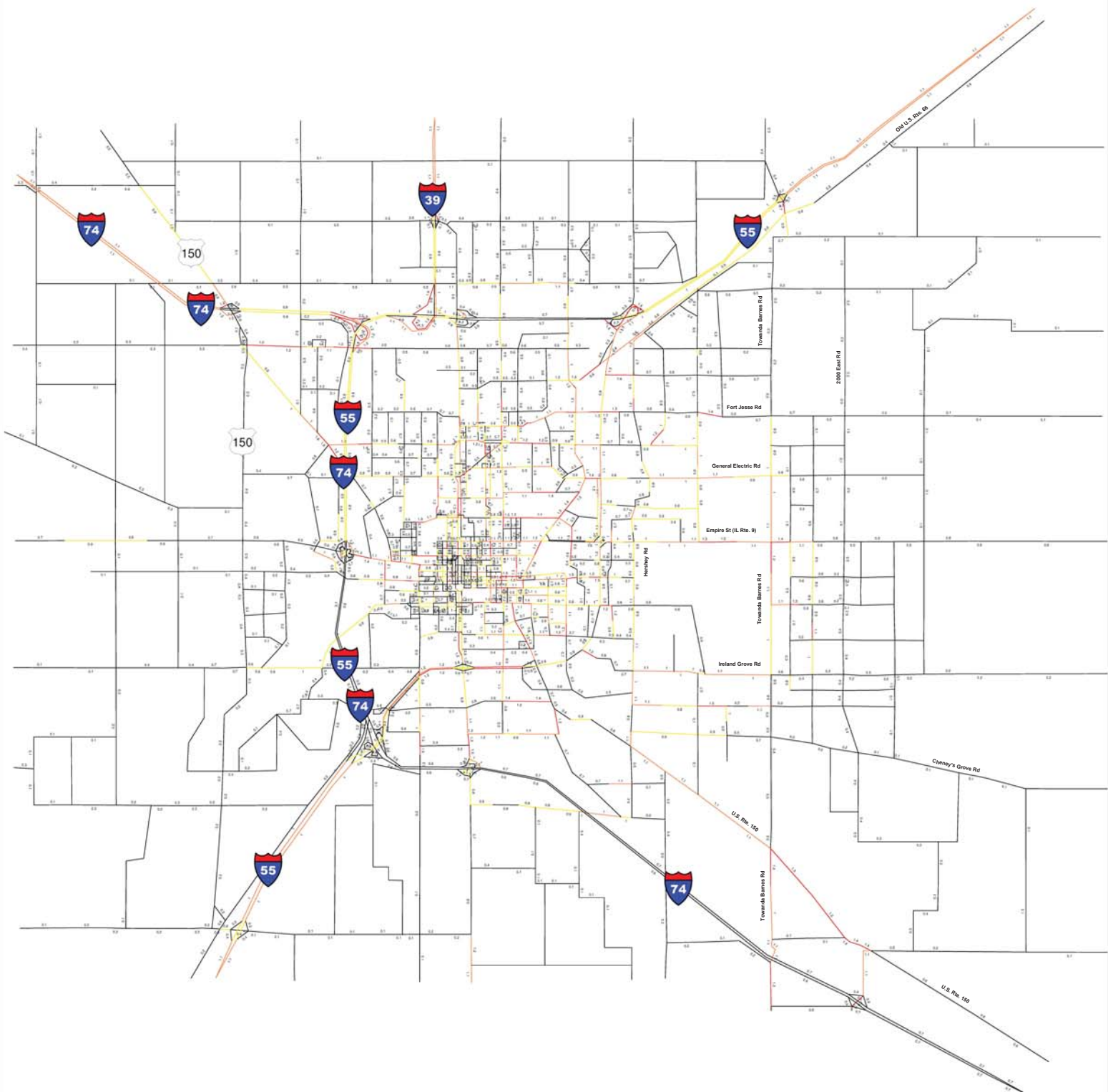
Year 2035 No-Build AADT



- Directional number of lanes=1
 - Directional number of lanes=2
 - Directional number of lanes=3
 - Directional number of lanes=4
- One-way coding is shown with arrows on the network

Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment

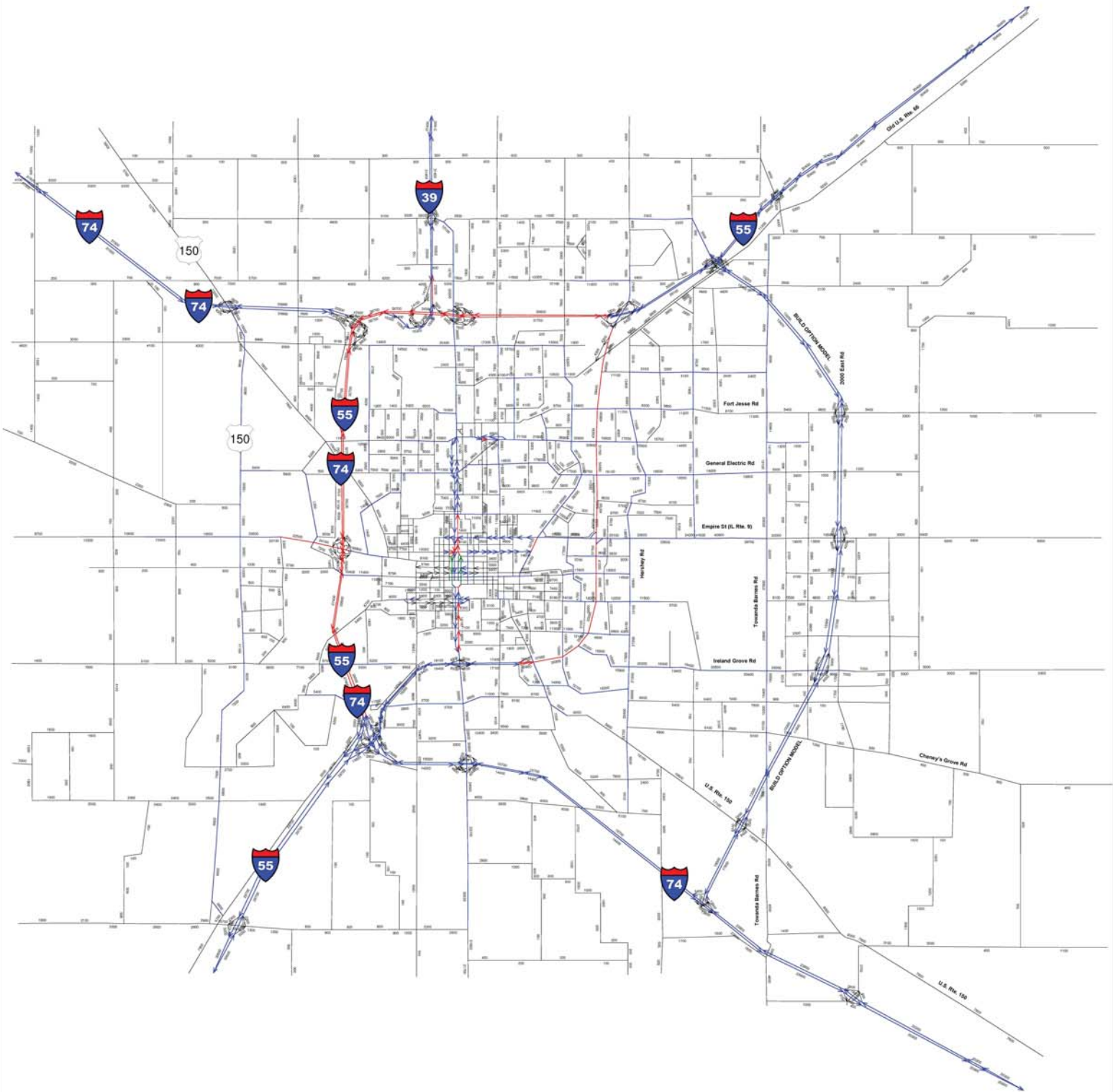
Year 2035 No-Build Volume to Capacity Ratio



- Volume to Capacity Ratio < 0.8
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio = 0.8 - 1.0
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio = 1.0 - 1.2
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio > 1.2
- One-way coding is shown with arrows on the network

Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment

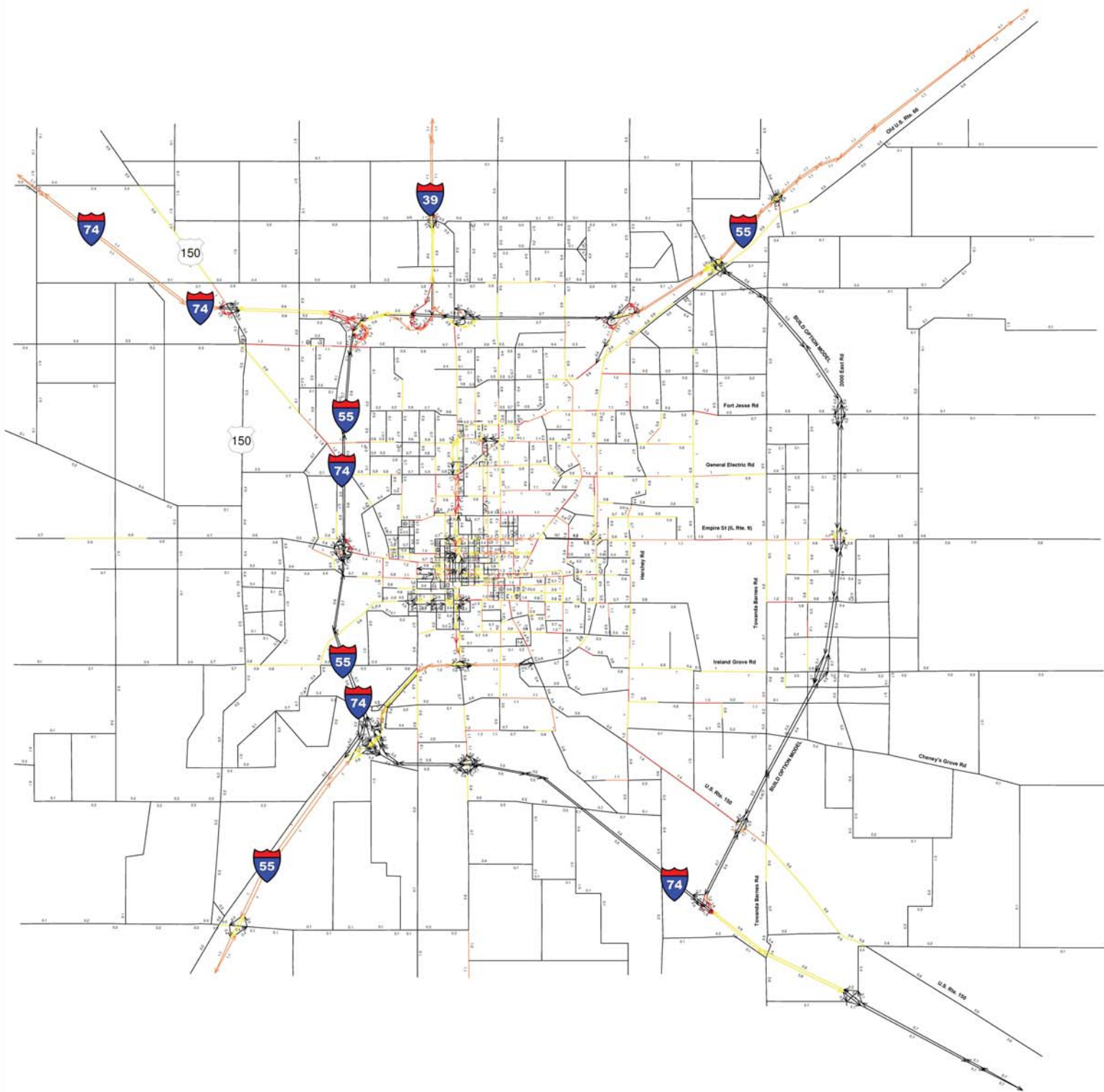
Year 2035 Build Option Model AADT



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 - Directional number of lanes=4
- One-way coding is shown with arrows on the network

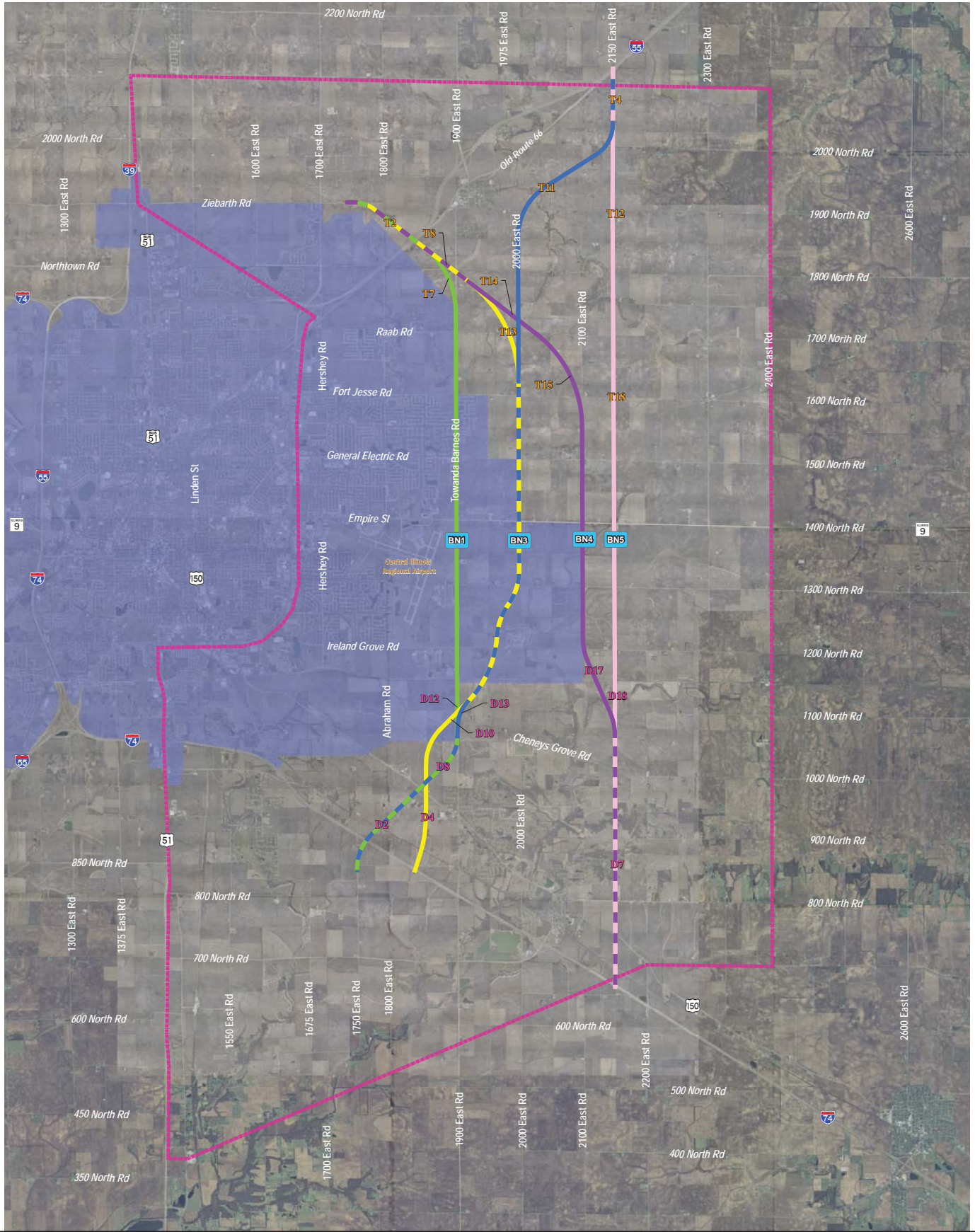
Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment

Year 2035 Build Option Model Volume to Capacity Ratio

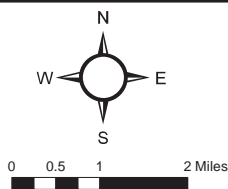


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Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment

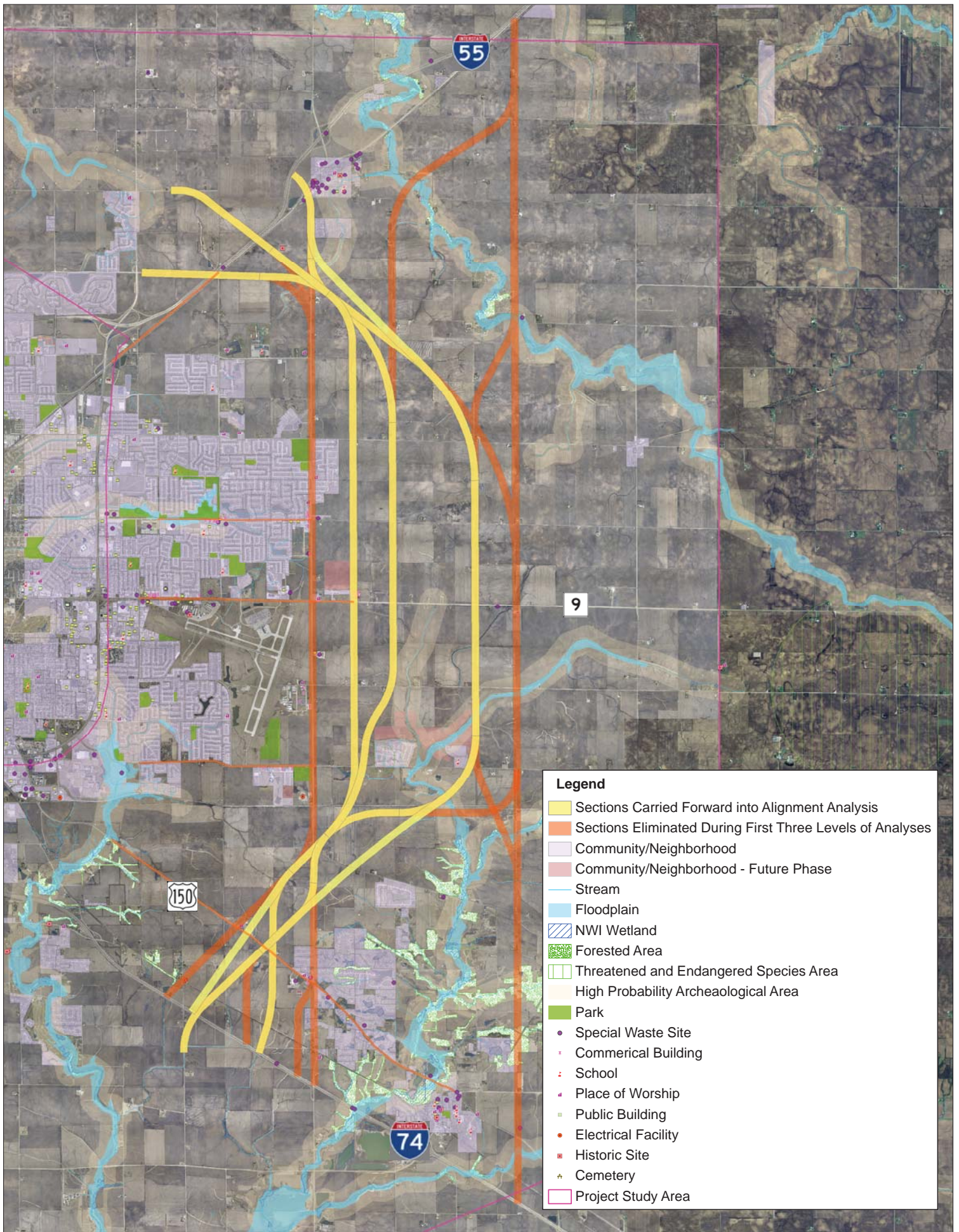


East Side Highway Environmental Assessment Alternatives Evaluation Travel Demand Models

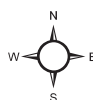


Legend

- Build Option 1
- Build Option 2
- Build Option 3
- Build Option 4
- Build Option 5
- 2035 Land Use Plan
- Project Study Area



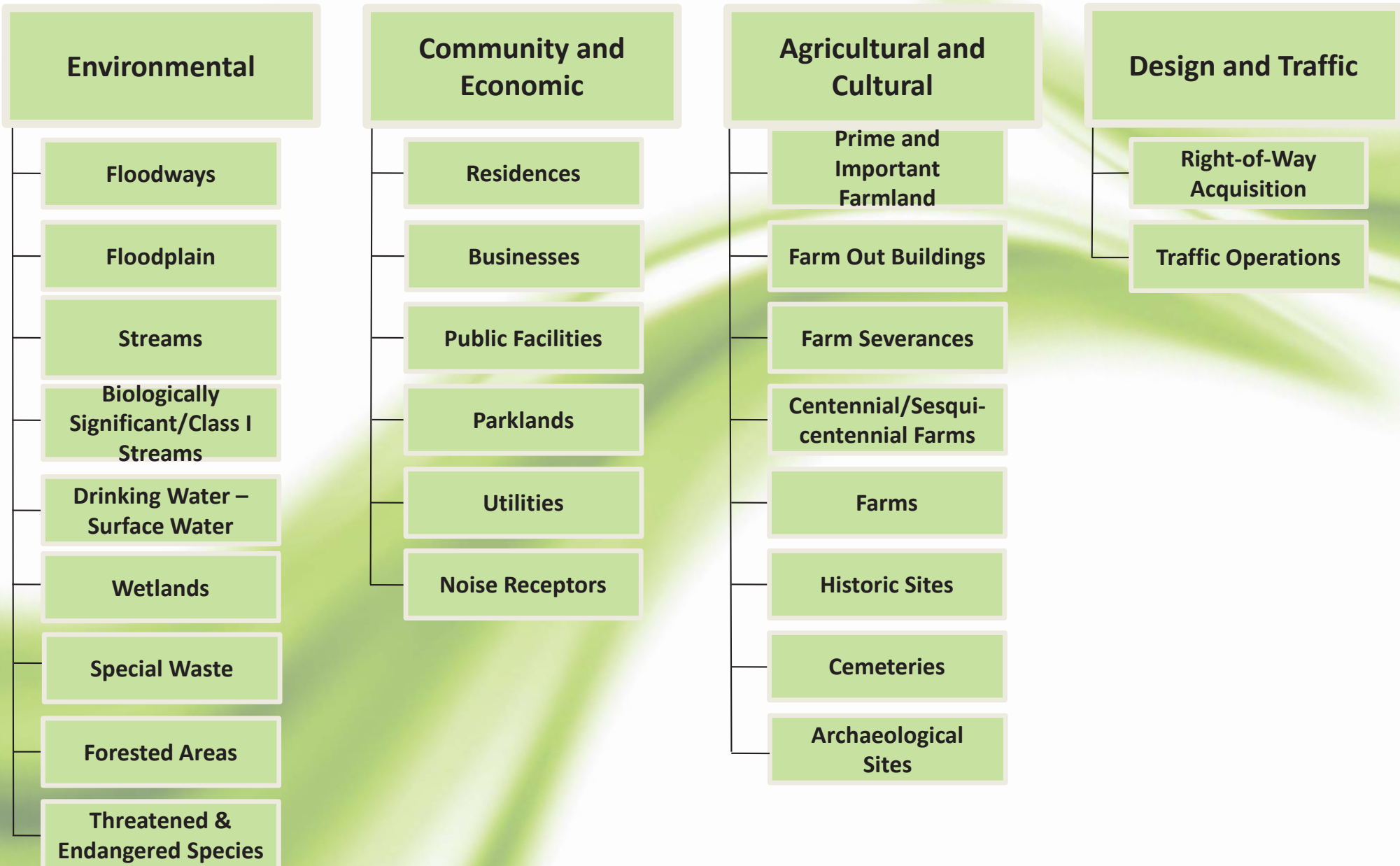
Environmental and Cultural Resources
August 18, 2011



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



LIST OF MACRO RESOURCES



Macro Analysis Tables

Criterion	Unit of Measure	Corridor Alternatives Segment							Corridor Alternatives Segment										
		T1 T5 BN1 D11 D1	T1 T5 BN1 D11 D4	T1 T5 BN1 D12 D8 D2	T1 T5 BN1 D12 D8 D3	T1 T6 BN2 D10 D1	T1 T6 BN2 D10 D4	T1 T6 BN2 D13 D8 D2	T1 T6 BN2 D13 D8 D3	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D10 D1	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D10 D4	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D13 D8 D2	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D13 D8 D3	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D1	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D4	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D13 D8 D2	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D13 D8 D3	T1 T6 T14 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D1	T1 T6 T14 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D4
		1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	26	27
Environmental																			
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	9	9	8	8
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Streams (number of crossings)	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	5	4	5	4	5	4
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1
Special Waste	CERCLIS, UST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	5	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
T&E Species	T&E Species (number of species affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community and Economic																			
Residences	Homes, including Farmhomes (number displaced)	41	40	39	39	14	13	10	10	10	9	6	6	12	11	8	8	8	7
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	6	5	5	5	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
	Public Service Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	7	6	6	6	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	1
Section 4(f) & 6(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Parklands (number affected)	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	9	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	7	5	5	5	8	6	6	6	7	5
Utility Infrastructure	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Noise	Receptors (number of receptors within 500 feet of corridor)	261	252	255	253	42	33	37	35	38	29	33	31	35	26	30	28	20	11
Agricultural																			
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	577	588	602	578	706	716	731	707	723	734	748	724	809	819	834	810	872	882
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	21	22	33	32	32	33	34	33	13	14	15	14	19	20	21	20	14	15
Severances	Tracts (number affected)	10	8	13	10	17	15	20	17	22	20	25	22	24	22	27	24	28	26
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	22	21	30	26	15	14	19	15	24	23	28	24	29	28	33	29	28	27
Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms	Farms (number affected)	3	3	3	3	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8
Farms Otherwise Affected	Farms (number affected)	57	56	60	57	59	58	60	57	58	57	59	56	64	63	65	62	69	68
Cultural																			
	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	19	19	19	19	30	30	30	30	75	75	75	75	61	61
Design																			
ROW	ROW Acquisition (acres)	631	639	659	636	719	727	744	720	721	730	746	723	797	805	822	798	880	888
Traffic																			
Safety Analysis	Statistics Based on Traffic Operations and Design Elements	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%



Macro Analysis Tables

Criterion	Unit of Measure	T1 T6 T14	T1 T6 T14	T2 T7	T2 T7	T2 T7	T2 T7	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T14	T2 T8 T14	T2 T8 T14	T2 T8 T14	
		T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	BN1 D11 D1	BN1 D11 D4	BN1 D12 D8 D2	BN1 D12 D8 D3	BN2 D10 D1	BN2 D10 D4	BN2 D13 D8 D2	BN2 D13 D8 D3	BN3 D10 D1	BN3 D10 D4	BN3 D13 D8 D2	BN3 D13 D8 D3	T15 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D1	T15 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D4	T15 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	T15 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D3
		28	29	33	34	35	36	39	40	41	42	45	46	47	48	51	52	53	54
Environmental																			
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	9	9
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Streams (number of crossings)	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	5	4	5	4
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.0
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1
Special Waste	CERCLIS, UST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	1	1	5	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
T&E Species	T&E Species (number of species affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Community and Economic																			
Residences	Homes, including Farmhomes (number displaced)	4	4	41	40	39	39	14	13	10	10	10	9	6	6	12	11	8	8
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	1	1	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	1	1	5	4	4	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Public Service Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	1	1	6	5	5	5	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	1
Section 4(f) & 6(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	0.0	0.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Parklands (number affected)	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	5	5	9	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	7	5	5	5	8	6	6	6
Utility Infrastructure	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Noise	Receptors (number of receptors within 500 feet of corridor)	15	13	262	253	256	254	43	34	38	36	39	30	34	32	36	27	31	29
Agricultural																			
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	897	873	591	602	616	592	713	724	738	714	731	741	756	732	816	826	841	817
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	16	15	22	23	34	33	33	34	35	34	14	15	16	15	20	21	22	21
Severances	Tracts (number affected)	31	28	14	12	17	14	21	19	24	21	26	24	29	26	28	26	31	28
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	32	28	26	25	34	30	15	14	19	15	24	23	28	24	29	28	33	29
Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms	Farms (number affected)	8	8	3	3	3	3	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8
Farms Otherwise Affected	Farms (number affected)	70	67	53	52	56	53	56	55	57	54	55	54	56	53	61	60	62	59
Cultural																			
	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	61	61	6	6	6	6	20	20	20	20	31	31	31	31	76	76	76	76
Design																			
ROW	ROW Acquisition (acres)	905	881	650	658	678	655	733	741	758	734	736	744	761	737	812	820	837	813
Traffic																			
Safety Analysis	Statistics Based on Traffic Operations and Design Elements	-43.3%	-43.3%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%



Macro Analysis Tables

Criterion	Unit of Measure	T2 T8 T14	T2 T8 T14	T2 T8 T14	T2 T8 T14	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10
		T16 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D1	T16 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D4	T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	BN1 D11 D1	BN1 D11 D4	BN1 D12 D8 D2	BN1 D12 D8 D3	BN2 D10 D1	BN2 D10 D4	BN2 D13 D8 D2	BN2 D13 D8 D3	BN3 D10 D1	BN3 D10 D4	BN3 D13 D8 D2	BN3 D13 D8 D3	BN4 D16 D14 D10 D1	BN4 D16 D14 D10 D4
		58	59	60	61	65	66	67	68	71	72	73	74	77	78	79	80	83	84
Environmental																			
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	8	8	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Streams (number of crossings)	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	5	4
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2
Special Waste	CERCLIS, UST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	2	1	1	1	7	6	6	6	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	3
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
T&E Species	T&E Species (number of species affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Community and Economic																			
Residences	Homes, including Farmhomes (number displaced)	8	7	4	4	54	53	52	52	26	25	22	22	22	21	18	18	24	23
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	1	1	1	1	11	11	11	11	9	9	9	9	4	4	4	4	4	4
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	1	0	0	0	6	5	5	5	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
	Public Service Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	1	0	0	0	7	6	6	6	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2
Section 4(f) & 6(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Parklands (number affected)	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	7	5	5	5	8	6	6	6	6	4	4	4	6	4	4	4	7	5
Utility Infrastructure	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Noise	Receptors (number of receptors within 500 feet of corridor)	21	12	16	14	297	288	291	289	78	69	73	71	74	65	69	67	71	62
Agricultural																			
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	879	890	905	880	537	548	562	537	654	665	680	655	672	682	697	673	757	768
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	15	16	17	16	20	21	32	31	31	32	33	32	12	13	14	13	18	19
Severances	Tracts (number affected)	32	30	35	32	9	7	12	9	18	16	21	18	23	21	26	23	25	23
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	28	27	32	28	26	25	34	30	15	14	19	15	24	23	28	24	29	28
Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms	Farms (number affected)	8	8	8	8	4	4	4	4	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	8	8
Farms Otherwise Affected	Farms (number affected)	66	65	67	64	55	54	58	55	53	52	54	51	52	51	53	50	58	57
Cultural																			
	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	63	63	63	63	23	23	23	23	22	22	22	22	33	33	33	33	78	78
Design																			
ROW	ROW Acquisition (acres)	894	902	919	895	604	612	632	609	682	690	707	684	685	693	710	686	761	769
Traffic																			
Safety Analysis	Statistics Based on Traffic Operations and Design Elements	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%



Macro Analysis Tables

Criterion	Unit of Measure	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T12	T4 T12	T4 T12	T4 T12	T4 T12	T4 T12	T4 T12	
		T14 T15 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	T14 T15 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D1	T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D4	T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D17 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D17 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D14 D13 D8 D3	D15 D14 D10 D1	D15 D14 D10 D4	D15 D14 D13 D8 D2
		85	86	90	91	92	93	97	98	99	100	103	104	105	106	110	111	112	113
Environmental																			
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	9	9	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	14	14	14	14	13	13	13	13
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Streams (number of crossings)	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.0
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0
Special Waste	CERCLIS, UST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	2
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
T&E Species	T&E Species (number of species affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community and Economic																			
Residences	Homes, including Farmhomes (number displaced)	20	20	20	19	16	16	14	13	10	10	18	17	14	14	13	12	9	9
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	4	4	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Public Service Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Section 4(f) & 6(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	Parklands (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	5	5	6	4	4	4	6	4	4	4	6	4	4	4	7	5	5	5
Utility Infrastructure	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Noise	Receptors (number of receptors within 500 feet of corridor)	66	64	56	47	51	49	44	35	39	37	42	33	37	35	26	17	21	19
Agricultural																			
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	782	758	821	831	846	822	803	814	829	805	825	836	850	826	875	885	900	876
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	20	19	13	14	15	14	30	31	32	31	42	43	44	43	35	36	37	36
Severances	Tracts (number affected)	28	25	29	27	32	29	25	23	28	25	21	19	24	21	20	18	23	20
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	33	29	28	27	32	28	38	37	42	38	33	32	37	33	27	26	31	27
Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms	Farms (number affected)	8	8	8	8	8	8	11	11	11	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Farms Otherwise Affected	Farms (number affected)	59	56	63	62	64	61	68	67	69	66	70	69	71	68	77	76	78	75
Cultural																			
	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	78	78	65	65	65	65	37	37	37	37	100	100	100	100	98	98	98	98
Design																			
ROW	ROW Acquisition (acres)	786	762	843	851	868	844	803	811	828	804	819	827	844	821	890	898	915	891
Traffic																			
Safety Analysis	Statistics Based on Traffic Operations and Design Elements	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%



Macro Analysis Tables

Criterion	Unit of Measure	T19 BN4	T19 BN4	T19 BN4	T19 BN4	T1 T6	T2 T8 T14	East-West Alt.
		D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	BN4 D19 D2	T14 T15 BN4 D19 D2	T15 BN4 D19 D2	
		117	118	119	120	121	122	
Environmental								
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	9	9	9	9	9	9	13
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Streams (number of crossings)	4	4	5	6	6	6	8
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	2	2	1	1	1	1	3
Special Waste	CERCLIS, UST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	1	1	19
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2
T&E Species	T&E Species (number of speceis affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community and Economic								
Residences	Homes, Including Farmhomes (number displaced)	22	20	17	15	6	6	106
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	4	4	4	4	0	0	14
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
	Public Service Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	2	2	2	2	2	1	8
Section 4(f) & 6(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Parklands (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
Utility Infrastructure	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Noise	Receptors (number of receptors wthin 500 feet of corridor)	73	62	66	62	26	27	1345
Agricultural								
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	750	764	778	768	824	831	275
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	18	19	20	10	11	12	0
Severances	Tracts (number affected)	19	19	24	18	21	25	8
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	29	26	31	29	31	31	12
Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms	Farms (number affected)	7	7	7	7	8	8	6
Farms Otherwise Affected	Farms (number affected)	58	57	59	58	64	61	27
Cultural								
	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	76	76	76	76	74	75	34
Design								
ROW	ROW Acquisition (acres)	751	764	781	764	805	820	225
Traffic								
Safety Analysis	Statistics Based on Traffic Operations and Design Elements	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	NA



Representative Options Alternatives	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2			Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5			Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION Segments	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3
	D11 D1	D11 D4	D12 D8 D2	D12 D8 D3	D12 D9 D5	D12 D9 D6	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Do the segments in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%			3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%			3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%
	Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	1.72	3.09	2.61	2.94			2.78	4.15	3.68	4.02			3.86	5.23	4.76	5.09
	Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)	48	48	48	48			58	58	58	58			58	58	58	58
	% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%			4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%			4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%
	Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ⁴ (minutes saved)	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30			1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35			1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35
	Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ⁵ (minutes saved)	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91			0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44			0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44
	Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ⁷	323	323	323	323			558	558	558	558			558	558	558	558
	% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	26%	26%	26%	26%			27%	27%	27%	27%			27%	27%	27%	27%
	Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	3,245	3,245	3,245	3,245			4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806			4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806

Representative Options Alternatives	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	23	24	Build Option 4	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 4	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION Segments	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1
	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	D16 D14 D13 D9 D5	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6	D17 D7	D15 D14 D10 D1	D15 D14 D10 D4	D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	D15 D14 D13 D9 D5	D15 D14 D13 D9 D6	D18 D7	D11 D1	D11 D4	D12 D8 D2	D12 D8 D3

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Do the segments in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%			1.82%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%			1.82%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%
	Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	6.83	8.20	7.73	8.06			19.76	9.04	10.41	9.94	10.28			22.03	1.93	3.30	2.82	3.15
	Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)	58	58	58	58			41	58	58	58	58			41	48	48	48	48
	% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%			3.12%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%			3.12%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%
	Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ⁴ (minutes saved)	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35			0.16	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35			0.16	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
	Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ⁵ (minutes saved)	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44			-0.04	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44			-0.04	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91
	Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ⁷	558	558	558	558			210	558	558	558	558			210	323	323	323	323
	% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	27%	27%	27%	27%			23%	27%	27%	27%	27%			23%	26%	26%	26%	26%
	Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806			2,737	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806			2,737	3,245	3,245	3,245	3,245

- Most Consistent
- Neutral
- Less Consistent
- Least Consistent
- Options - Alternatives Modeled for Traffic Operations
- Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #1
- Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #2

1 Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Illinois Nature Preserves, State or Federal Sites
 2 Clear zone requirements in accordance with expansion/operational initiatives presented in CIRA's master plan.
 3 According to the DOT Community Impact Assessment Manual, the FHWA has identified a community as a "distinctive, homogeneous, stable, self-contained unit of a larger spatial area defined by geographic boundaries, ethnic, or cultural characteristics of the inhabitants; a psychological unity among the residents; and the concentrated use of the area's facilities. A community is an entity with economic, social and perhaps political functions. It usually has a name identify and number of community service facilities such as business districts, religious institutions, schools, health centers, and fire and police stations. By contrast, a neighborhood is a small social unit based on face-to-face contacts."
 The guidelines for determining neighborhood and community boundaries contained in the Manual will be consulted for this criterion.
 4 Acres ≤ 5 - Good 5 < Acres ≤ 10 - Medium 10 < Acres ≤ 15 - High 15 < Acres - Highest
 5 E/W Pairs: State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170) and TAZ 11, Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 168
 6 E/W Pairs: Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 353, St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114) and TAZ 353
 7 Major Travel Generators: Mitsubishi Motors (TAZ 57), Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73), Country Insurance (TAZ 83), St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114), Central Illinois Regional Airport (TAZ 117), Bloomington CBD (TAZ 129), State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170)



Representative Options Alternatives	Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5	
	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
	T2 T7	T2 T7	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T13	T2 T8 T14 T15	T2 T8 T14 T15	T2 T8 T14 T15	T2 T8 T14 T15
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION Segments	BN1	BN1	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4
	D12 D9 D5	D12 D9 D6	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D16 D14 D13 D8 D3

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹																		
	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? ² (i.e. is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³																			
YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)																	
	Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles) ⁴		2.98	4.35	3.87	4.21	4.05	5.42	5.42	5.29	7.02	8.39	7.92	8.26				
	Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)		58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58				
	% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)		4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%				
	Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ⁵ (minutes saved)		1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35				
	Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ⁶ (minutes saved)		0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44				
	Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ⁷		558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558				
	% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)		27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%				
	Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)		4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806				

Representative Options Alternatives	Build Option 4		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 5		Build Option 4		Build Option 2		Build Option 2		Build Option 2	
	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
	T2 T8 T14 T15	T2 T8 T14 T15	T2 T8 T14 T15	T2 T8 T14 T16	T2 T8 T14 T16	T2 T8 T14 T16	T2 T8 T14 T16	T2 T8 T14 T16	T2 T8 T14 T16	T2 T8 T14 T16	T2 T8 T14 T16	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T9	T3 T9
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION Segments	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN2	BN2
	D16 D14 D13 D9 D5	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6	D17 D7	D15 D14 D10 D1	D15 D14 D10 D4	D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	D15 D14 D13 D9 D5	D15 D14 D13 D9 D6	D18 D7	D11 D1	D11 D4	D12 D8 D2	D12 D8 D3	D12 D9 D5	D12 D9 D6	D10 D1	D10 D4

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹																		
	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? ² (i.e. is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³																			
YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	YES	YES	NO	NO		

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)																	
	Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles) ⁴		19.95	923.71%	10.61	10.13	10.47	22.22	2.44	3.81	3.33	3.67	3.43%	3.43%				
	Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)		41	58	58	58	58	41	48	48	48	48	58	58				
	% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)		3.12%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	3.12%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	4.05%	4.05%				
	Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ⁵ (minutes saved)		0.16	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	0.16	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35				
	Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ⁶ (minutes saved)		-0.04	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	-0.04	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	0.44	0.44				
	Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ⁷		210	558	558	558	558	210	323	323	323	323	558	558				
	% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)		23%	27%	27%	27%	27%	23%	26%	26%	26%	26%	27%	27%				
	Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)		2,737	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	2,737	3,245	3,245	3,245	3,245	4,806	4,806				

- Most Consistent
- Neutral
- Less Consistent
- Least Consistent
- Options - Alternatives Modeled for Traffic Operations
- Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #1
- Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #2

1 Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Illinois Nature Preserves, State or Federal Sites
 2 Clear zone requirements in accordance with expansion/operational initiatives presented in CIRA's master plan.
 3 According to the DOT Community Impact Assessment Manual, the FHWA has identified a community as a "distinctive, homogeneous, stable, self-contained unit of a larger spatial area defined by geographic boundaries, ethnic, or cultural characteristics of the inhabitants; a psychological unity among the residents; and the concentrated use of the area's facilities. A community is an entity with economic, social and perhaps political functions. It usually has a name identify and number of community service facilities such as business districts, religious institutions, schools, health centers, and fire and police stations. By contrast, a neighborhood is a small social unit based on face-to-face contacts."
 The guidelines for determining neighborhood and community boundaries contained in the Manual will be consulted for this criterion.
 4 Acres ≤ 5 - Good 5 < Acres ≤ 10 - Medium 10 < Acres ≤ 15 - High 15 < Acres - Highest
 5 N/S Pairs: State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170) and TAZ 11, Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 168
 6 E/W Pairs: Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 353, St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114) and TAZ 353
 7 Major Travel Generators: Mitsubishi Motors (TAZ 57), Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73), Country Insurance (TAZ 83), St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114), Central Illinois Regional Airport (TAZ 117), Bloomington CBD (TAZ 129), State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170)



Representative Options Alternatives		Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 4	Build Option 5		
		73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90			
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION	Segments	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10	T3 T10 T13	T3 T10 T13	T3 T10 T13	T3 T10 T13	T3 T10 T13	T3 T10 T13	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	T3 T10 T14 T15	
		BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4
		D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	D16 D14 D13 D9 D5	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6	D17 D7	D15 D14 D10 D1			

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Do the segments in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	3.43%	3.43%			3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%			3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%			1.82%	3.43%
	Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	4.34	4.68			4.52	5.89	5.42	5.75			7.49	8.86	8.39	8.72			20.42	9.70
	Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)	58	58			58	58	58	58			58	58	58	58			41	58
	% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	4.05%	4.05%			4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%			4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%			3.12%	4.05%
	Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ¹ (minutes saved)	1.35	1.35			1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35			1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35			0.16	1.35
	Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ⁴ (minutes saved)	0.44	0.44			0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44			0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44			-0.04	0.44
	Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ⁷	558	558			558	558	558	558			558	558	558	558			210	558
	% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	27%	27%			27%	27%	27%	27%			27%	27%	27%	27%			23%	27%
	Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	4,806	4,806			4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806			4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806			2,737	4,806

Representative Options Alternatives		Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	94	95	Build Option 4	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	
		91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108			
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION	Segments	T3 T10 T14 T16	T3 T10 T14 T16	T3 T10 T14 T16	T3 T10 T14 T16	T3 T10 T14 T16	T3 T10 T14 T16	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T11	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T17
		BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4
		D15 D14 D10 D4	D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	D15 D14 D13 D9 D5	D15 D14 D13 D9 D6	D18 D7	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	D16 D14 D13 D9 D5	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6	

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Do the segments in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE	YES	YES	YES

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%			1.82%	2.41%	2.41%	2.41%	2.41%			2.41%	2.41%	2.41%	2.41%				
	Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	11.07	10.60	10.94			22.69	9.27	10.64	10.17	10.51			16.30	17.67	17.20	17.53				
	Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)	58	58	58			41	73	73	73	73			73	73	73	73				
	% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%			3.12%	5.09%	5.09%	5.09%	5.09%			5.09%	5.09%	5.09%	5.09%				
	Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ¹ (minutes saved)	1.35	1.35	1.35			0.16	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04			1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04				
	Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ⁴ (minutes saved)	0.44	0.44	0.44			-0.04	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09			-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09				
	Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ⁷	558	558	558			210	513	513	513	513			513	513	513	513				
	% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	27%	27%	27%			23%	26%	26%	26%	26%			26%	26%	26%	26%				
	Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	4,806	4,806	4,806			2,737	5,348	5,348	5,348	5,348			5,348	5,348	5,348	5,348				

- Most Consistent
- Neutral
- Less Consistent
- Least Consistent
- Options - Alternatives Modeled for Traffic Operations
- Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #1
- Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #2

1 Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Illinois Nature Preserves, State or Federal Sites
2 Clear zone requirements in accordance with expansion/operational initiatives presented in CIRA's master plan.
3 According to the DOT Community Impact Assessment Manual, the FHWA has identified a community as "distinctive, homogeneous, stable, self-contained unit of a larger spatial area defined by geographic boundaries, ethnic, or cultural characteristics of the inhabitants; a psychological unity among the residents; and the concentrated use of the area's facilities. A community is an entity with economic, social and perhaps political functions. It usually has a name identify and number of community service facilities such as business districts, religious institutions, schools, health centers, and fire and police stations. By contrast, a neighborhood is a small social unit based on face-to-face contacts."
The guidelines for determining neighborhood and community boundaries contained in the Manual will be consulted for this criterion.
4 Acres < 5 - Good 5-4 Acres < 10 - Medium 10-4 Acres < 15 - High 15- < Acres - Highest
5 E/W Pairs: State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170) and TAZ 11, Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 168
6 E/W Pairs: Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 353, St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114) and TAZ 353
7 Major Travel Generators: Mitsubishi Motors (TAZ 57), Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73), Country Insurance (TAZ 83), St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114), Central Illinois Regional Airport (TAZ 117), Bloomington CBD (TAZ 129), State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170)



Representative Options Alternatives	Build Option 1	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 3	Build Option 1		
	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116		Transit Alternative	E-W Alternative
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION Segments	T4 T12 T17	T4 T12 T18	T4 T12 T18	T4 T12 T18	T4 T12 T18	T4 T12 T18	T4 T12 T18	T4 T12 T18	T4 T12 T18		
	BN4	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5		US 150, Ireland Grove, Empire, GE, US 66
	D17 D7	D15 D14 D10 D1	D15 D14 D10 D4	D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	D15 D14 D13 D9 D5	D15 D14 D13 D9 D6	D18 D7			

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

C R I T E R I A	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Do the segments in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	1.29%	2.41%	2.41%	2.41%	2.41%		1.29%	
Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	29.23	19.10	20.47	20.00	20.33		32.09	11.47
Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)	29	73	73	73	73		29	51
% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	2.55%	5.09%	5.09%	5.09%	5.09%		2.55%	3.38%
Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs (minutes saved)	0.18	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04		0.18	
Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs (minutes saved)	-0.20	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09		-0.20	
Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day)	367	513	513	513	513		367	315
% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	31%	26%	26%	26%	26%		31%	N/A
Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	4,350	5,348	5,348	5,348	5,348		4,350	1,815

Most Consistent
Neutral
Less Consistent
Least Consistent
Options - Alternatives Modeled for Traffic Operations
Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #1
Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #2

- Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Illinois Nature Preserves, State or Federal Sites
- Clear zone requirements in accordance with expansion/operational initiatives presented in CIRA's master plan.
- According to the IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual, the FHWA has identified a community as a "distinctive, homogeneous, stable, self-contained unit of a larger spatial area defined by geographic boundaries, ethnic, or cultural characteristics of the inhabitants; a psychological unity among the residents; and the concentrated use of the area's facilities. A community is an entity with economic, social and perhaps political functions. It usually has a name and number of community service facilities such as business districts, religious institutions, schools, health centers, and fire and police stations. By contrast, a neighborhood is a small social unit based on face-to-face contacts." The guidelines for determining neighborhood and community boundaries contained in the Manual will be consulted for this criterion.
- 4 Acres ≤ 9 - Good 5 < Acres ≤ 10 - Medium 10 < Acres ≤ 15 - High 15 < Acres - Highest
- N/S Pairs: State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170) and TAZ 11, Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 168
- E/W Pairs: Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 353, St. Joseph Normal Center (TAZ 114) and TAZ 353
- Major Travel Generators: Mitsubishi Motors (TAZ 57), Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73), Country Insurance (TAZ 83), St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114), Central Illinois Regional Airport (TAZ 117), Bloomington CBD (TAZ 129), State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170)



Representative Options	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5
Alternatives	117	118	119	120	121	122
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY EA: EVALUATION Segments	T19	T19	T19	T19	T1 T6 T14 T15	T2 T8 T14 T15
	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4
	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D19 D2	D19 D2	D19 D2

Evaluation #1: Initial Screening of Alternatives

CIRIA	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Do the segments in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe

Evaluation #2: Purpose & Need Screening of Alternatives

Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%
Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	8.10	9.09	8.61	9.21	8.32	8.52
Decrease in congested road miles (v/c<0.8)	58	58	58	58	58	58
% change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%
Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ⁴ (minutes saved)	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35
Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ⁵ (minutes saved)	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44
Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ⁷	558	558	558	558	558	558
% increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%
Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806

Most Consistent
Neutral
Less Consistent
Least Consistent
Options - Alternatives Modeled for Traffic Operations
Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #1
Alternatives Eliminated in Screening #2

1 Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Illinois Nature Preserves, State or Federal Sites

2 Clear zone requirements in accordance with expansion/operational initiatives presented in CIRIA's master plan.

3 According to the IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual, the FHWA has identified a community as a "distinctive, homogeneous, stable, self-contained unit of a larger spatial area defined by geographic boundaries, ethnic, or cultural characteristics of the inhabitants; a psychological unity among the residents; and the concentrated use of the area's facilities. A community is an entity with economic, social and perhaps political functions. It usually has a name identify and number of community service facilities such as business districts, religious institutions, schools, health centers, and fire and police stations. By contrast, a neighborhood is a small social unit based on face-to-face contacts,"

The guidelines for determining neighborhood and community boundaries contained in the Manual will be consulted for this criterion.

15 < Acres - Highest

4 Acres ≤ 5 - Good 5 < Acres ≤ 10 - Medium 10 < Acres ≤ 15 - High

5 N/S Pairs: State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170) and TAZ 11, Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 168

6 E/W Pairs: Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 353, St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114) and TAZ 353

7 Major Travel Generators: Mitsubishi Motors (TAZ 57), Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73), Country Insurance (TAZ 83), St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114), Central Illinois Regional Airport (TAZ 117), Bloomington CBD (TAZ 129), State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170)





WELCOME!

McLean County, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal welcome you to the August 18, 2011, public information meeting for the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA).

The ESH alternatives will be narrowed down through a five-step evaluation process. The first three levels of analysis have been completed and will be presented at tonight's meeting. You are invited to browse exhibits on display and visit with personnel from the County, IDOT, Bloomington, Normal, and their consultants who are in attendance. Information presented will be made available on the project website following the meeting.

Purpose
The purpose of the meeting is to present the alternative development and evaluation process to date.

AGENDA An identical, brief presentation will be given at the following times:

6:15 p.m.

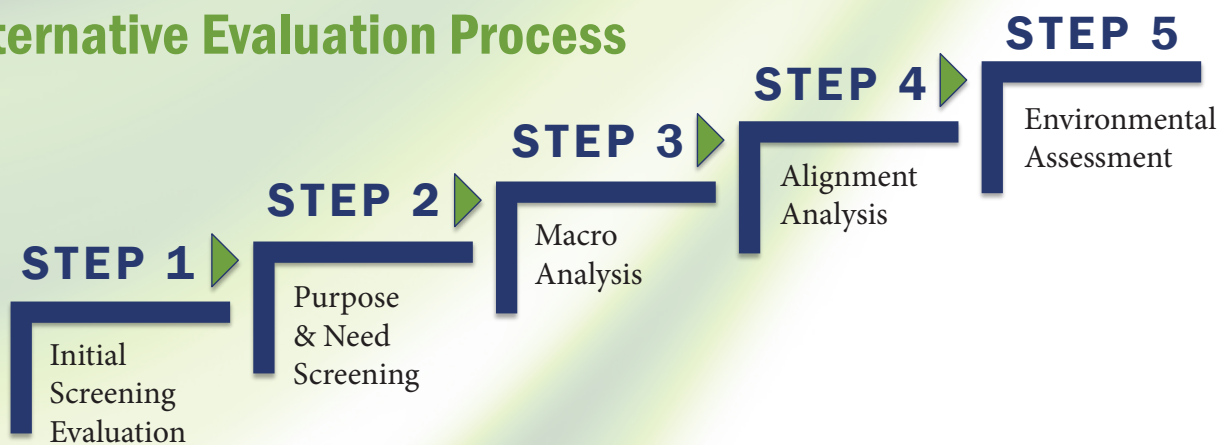
7:15 p.m.

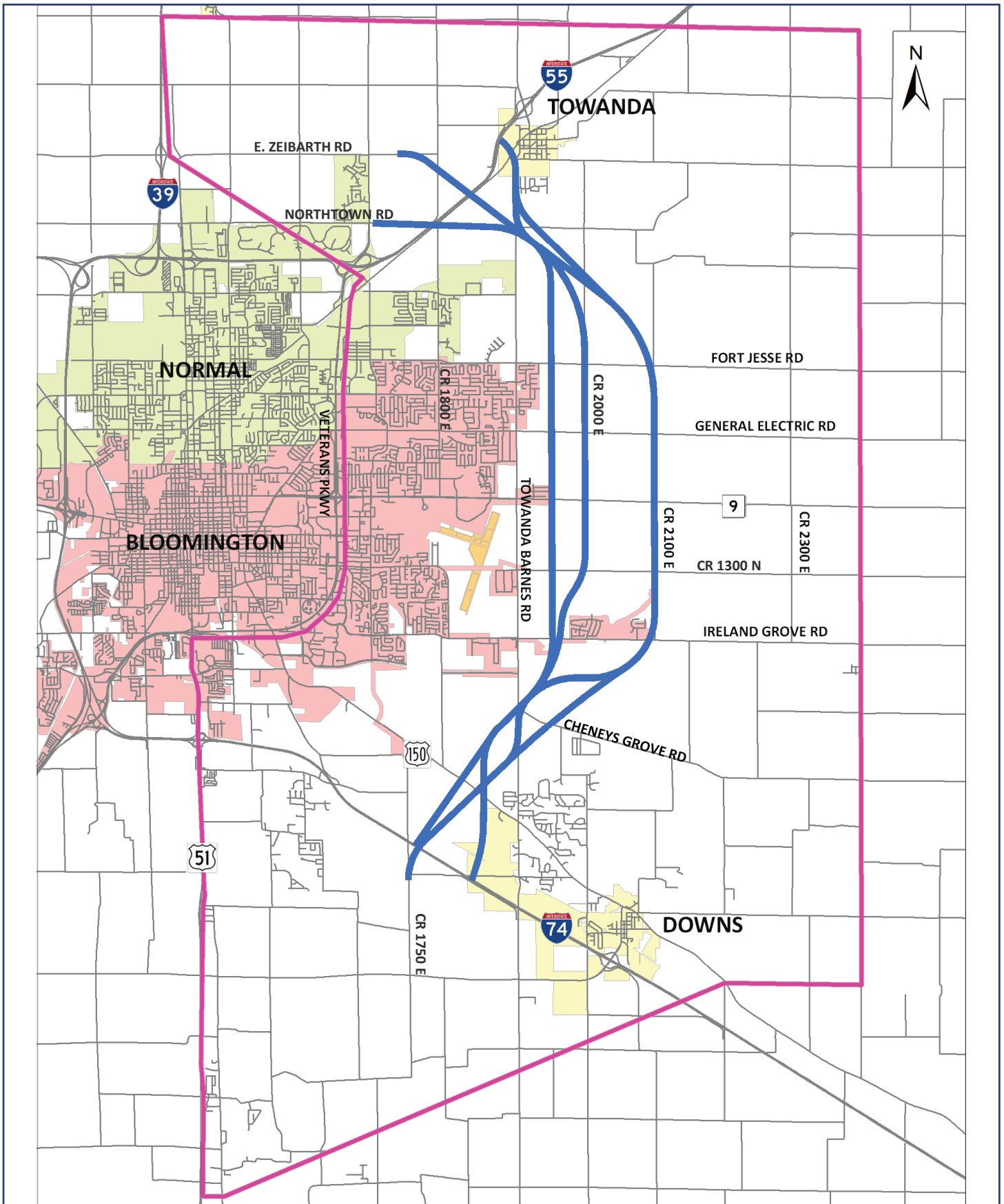
Timeline



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing

Alternative Evaluation Process





Map of Alternatives

The map above shows the alternatives remaining after the Macro Analysis Evaluation. These alternatives will be carried forward for further evaluation. In addition to these alternatives, the No-Build Alternative will remain under consideration.



COMMENT FORM

**Public Information Meeting
August 18**

Please use this comment form to provide input on the information presented tonight. Please discuss elements that you support as well as elements on which you may disagree. Your comments and opinions are an important part of this project and you are encouraged to provide them in writing today or soon after this meeting. Comments can be returned via mail (see reverse side of sheet), email (ESHEA@clarkdietz.com), or fax (217-373-8923). Comments must be received by **September 1, 2011** to become part of the official meeting record.

Name: _____
First name Last name

Phone: () _____

Address: _____
Number and street Apt. No.

City State ZIP code

Email: _____

Please provide your comments on the alternative evaluation process and remaining alternatives under consideration as presented at tonight's meeting.

Please check here if additional comments are listed on reverse side.

Fold Back Second

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Clark Dietz, Inc.
Attn: Mr. Jerry Payonk, P.E.
125 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Fold Back First

Comments:



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 13

Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Cornerstone Christian Academy supports this project!!

We would want to be sure that full access to our school would be available during construction.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The project is not currently funded for construction; because of this, there is no proposed date of construction. Access to residences, schools, and public facilities will be maintained through project construction. However, a detailed construction plan is not included as part of the EA. Construction staging details will be developed after the EA is completed.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

The 3 alternatives are basically in our backyard. My husband, young son, and I just moved to Bloomington & purchased our dream home: a nice neighborhood with plenty of other children to grow with, a spacious, beautiful home & lot with comparable homes surrounding us & our yard backs up to farmland. Not to mention the plans for a park to be built right next door. If the alternatives (especially the highway that could be created west of CR2000) are built, this will not only affect our neighborhood growth & value, but also our children's park, property value and aesthetic appeal. It will create additional noise, danger to potentially adventurous children & a disruption to our peace. I've just moved to town & have already heard what a wonderful community I've come to. I've heard a school may be established close by (this was just from others in my neighborhood – nothing "official"). The park that will be built will be wonderful additions to our community. Please consider the effects it will have on the new development and property value and residential growth of the East Side. I completely understand the need for an alternative. My request is that it be further out – either CR2000 or CR2100, rather than in Eagle View's "backyard." I sincerely appreciate the time & consideration you'll give to myself & my neighbor's comments & legitimate concerns.

Response: Thank you for the information. One goal of the ESH study is to select an alternative that meets the project's Purpose and Need and also minimizes community and environmental impacts. The project team will consider all park areas and will contact local and regional agencies to obtain

information pertaining to the proposed park near Eagle View South. During the screening of alternatives, avoiding impacts to existing parks is considered an important criterion, as parks are protected property. Safety is another important component of the ESH project. The proximity to schools and areas such as parks is considered and safety will be studied. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and neighbors in mind.

Projected noise levels and potential impacts at sensitive noise receptors (e.g., homes, parks) are investigated during the next level of alternative analysis, the Environmental Assessment. A detailed noise analysis which follows federal and state guidelines will be performed for the remaining alternatives. Where noise impacts are determined, mitigation measures such as noise walls may be recommended, as appropriate. Where noise walls are recommended, affected homeowners will be given opportunity for input.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer

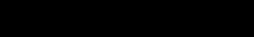


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December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

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Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

This is in regards to a recent mailing we received. What is the thought process and homework that has been done by Clark Dietz that has allowed you to add the two-options to the west to Route 74 back into the picture? Those 2 routes were eliminated by you at an earlier date, by whatever criteria you were using at that time. Now by changing the criteria you have put them back as options. This is quite a contradiction. These two western options go to:

- *Corn Belt Electric Substation on Road 1750*
- *Cell Tower of AT&T, and Verizon and a Victorian home on our property*
- *Land Blocks a 46 acre tract of Franzie and Dorothy Loepp in Bloomington Township, Section 36*
- *Land Blocks 128 acres of Frances Bozarth in Old Town Township, Section 31. This property has 2 nice homes on it and almost a mile lane to get to 1750, caused by the construction of 74. They lost their lane south to a township road.*

These two western options to Route 74 go diagonally across farmland, and create triangle fields, point rows, and divide fields which were more square before.

As has been stated before many times, why can we not use existing roads and save this destruction of farmland. Using another north south road for the connector to 74 would be more beneficial to everyone.

We are more than happy to share with someone from Clark Dietz these 2 proposed land blocked parcels. Home phone [REDACTED]

Response: Thank you for your comment. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires the examination of all feasible options, including those that were eliminated in previous studies. The alternatives were developed with input from the Citizen's Working Group and Project Study Group; over 129 alternatives were initially developed for consideration. These alternatives are being screened based upon numerous environmental impacts and engineering considerations. Alternatives were designed to utilize existing pavement when feasible. The amount of new pavement required is considered when evaluating alternatives.

Farmland impacts, including severed tracts, tracts with access change, and prime farmland were calculated during the alternatives evaluation process. Alternatives with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated. Additional agricultural impacts will be analyzed in detail in the next stage of analysis, the Environmental Assessment. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Comments on August 18, 2011 Public Meeting

Thanks to you and your staff for the information you provided at the August 18th meeting. We recognize the need for planning for a growing community but we do have some concerns. The information we received that night led us to believe that notification of potentially affected property owners was limited to public notice. There is a row of homes on Rt 150 adjacent to our farm and many of those occupants are elderly. We are concerned that some of those folks may not be "in the loop" in this final phase of planning. Also it was stated that no questions were allowed in the public presentation portion of this meeting. We found that to be un-democratic and short sighted. In this meeting we learned that the alternative paths for the east side bypass have been narrowed to 33 and now it appears that 2 of the 3 southern most paths will likely cross our 150 acre farm located on the south side of Rt 150 just across from Victory Christian Center Church. I also learned at this meeting that there are going to be people from your firm doing an on-site evaluation in the near future. I hope that I will be informed prior to anyone being on my farm. I also request to be provided proof of adequate insurance prior to entrance and be informed of the nature of the activities that will be performed as there is currently a rather valuable corn crop growing in our field. If one of the paths does proceed through our farm, we have concerns about how it will impact the present value of our farm for farming purposes as well as the future value for other potential uses.

- There are several drainage systems, both underground and above ground that drain both east to west and north to south on our farm. Some have been recently upgraded at great*

expense and some may need future renovation in the future. We need to protect both past and future drainage systems in order to preserve the value of this highly productive farm land.

- Our farm is very long north to south. If it were split as shown on the most recent map of alternative, we will end up with pie shaped parcels that will consist of point rows which add to the difficulty to farm and decrease yield per acre. In addition, depending upon placement of the road and the type of road constructed we may lose access to a large portion of our farm land as it would be land locked. This would drastically reduce the value of these isolated acres. Any access granted would need to be adequate to allow modern farm equipment to access the landlocked acres easily without alterations.*
- We also would oppose any land use restrictions being placed on our land as this would result in the loss of rights of future use and make a sale of our farm difficult and likely reduce its value. This appears to us to be confiscation without compensation!*

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Response: Thank you for your comment. The project team attempts to provide adequate notice of Public Information Meetings. Notices were placed in local newspapers and in public locations such as libraries and grocery stores. Notices were mailed to everyone who signed in with their contact information at a previous Public Information Meeting. Stakeholders who are interested in joining the mailing list are encouraged to contact the project team via the website, via email (ESH@clark-dietz.com), or at (217) 373-8901.

You should receive a letter in the mail prior to field staff conducting on-site investigation. Staff that accesses private property will have a letter of permission from the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Farmland impacts, including severed tracts, tracts with access change, and prime farmland were calculated during the alternatives evaluation process. Alternatives with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated. Farmland Additional agricultural impacts will be analyzed in detail in the next stage of analysis, the Environmental Assessment. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

During final design (after the EA is complete), coordination with impacted property owners will assist in the identification of field tile locations. Exploration trenching may be conducted on both sides of the right-of-way prior to construction to locate any unknown field tile that may be impacted by the newly constructed roadway. If any are found, they are replaced within the right-of-way with stronger concrete pipe to protect against the structural load of the new roadway. There is no land restriction associated with the planning process or the completion of the EA study; however, once a preferred alternative is selected, that information will result in identification of parcels that ultimately would be purchased. Zoning by the local authority is the only type of land use restriction that exists in the area and the ESH does not affect zoning practices.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S. Schmitt", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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December 13, 2011

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

1. *I do not like the fact that you cannot tell us what kind of road it is going to be. You say it isn't an interstate connector, but it isn't going to be a road w/ businesses on it -- like Veterans Pkwy.*
2. *Workers that live on the east side go east/west, not north/south. This won't help east side commuters.*
3. *You already said your original population estimates were off for 2010. Your 2035 #'s are probably off too. Where are these tens of thousands of people going to work?*
4. *The 2 routes between Towanda Barnes and the grove n.hood isolate the grove from town. Why would you separate the biggest (soon) n.hood in town?*
5. *What routes were used to calculate the "hours saved"? The numbers presented seemed unrealistic.*
6. *If it is going to mainly be a N/S connector, just improve the existing road east of the grove. Why eliminate hundreds of farm acres when there is already a N/S road there?*

Response: The project team is currently analyzing data, including existing and future traffic patterns, to determine the ultimate facility type (e.g., arterial, expressway, or freeway) and level of access for the ESH. That information will be presented at a Public Information Meeting, tentatively scheduled for January 2012. You will be added to the mailing list and notified of upcoming public meetings.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate regional and local traffic traveling to businesses, residential areas, and job centers. East-west improvements may be recommended in conjunction with the north-south Build Alternatives, and will be considered in the next phase of study, the Environmental Assessment.

It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

Access provisions for residential areas, including The Grove, are currently being examined and will be considered in the next phase of analysis, the Environmental Assessment. Maintaining access between urban areas/ job centers and residential areas will be an important element of the analysis.

In calculating the "hours saved", two level of analysis were performed. The first was to look at travel time savings from various activity centers in the year 2035 (such as the Normal Multimodal Center or State Farm South Campus) to three residential areas on the east side (one north, one south, and one center). A second level looked at travel time savings for the entire transportation network. For each analysis using the given travel demand model, of which there were five, hours saved were calculated using the most efficient route that the respective model identified. These analyses determined representative travel time savings for concentrated areas of population and employment, as it is not prudent to study each potential home and work trip in the project area individually.

All alternatives are being screened for their engineering feasibility and environmental impacts. Several alternatives that utilize a portion of existing roads, including CR 2000 E and CR 2100 E, were evaluated and included in the alternative analysis evaluation.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

December 13, 2011

[REDACTED]

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Thank you for one of the most informative meetings yet – I appreciated learning how the present options were arrived at for presentation. That being said, I still strongly am convinced that the improvement of east-west roads would do more (and be more cost effective) to improve access to major work locations. The upgrading of Rt 9 and 150 to 4 lanes, especially with an access from 150 to St. Farm would relieve 50% of the Towanda Barnes flow. Ft Jesse, Ireland Grove, Cheneys Grove upgrading to 3 lanes would allow more direct access to BL/Normal. I frankly do not see the necessity of connecting I 74 and I 55 to serve the local traffic needs – The expansion of the west side interstates provides through traffic routing. If old Rt 66 and 150 were upgraded to 4 lanes a 3 lane N-S road at 2100 E would allow access to developments and the schools in that area. I also feel that in light of the present economy, the financial states of our state and nation, and the business environment in Illinois, anticipated/projected expansion is overly optimistic! Although this is a desirable area to live at present, taxes and cost of living increases are making it less. At present my vote would be the “no build” option with a major effort to improve E-W access alternatives. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The purpose of the ESH is to accommodate both local and regional access and mobility. An East-West Only Alternative was considered and eliminated during the Macro Analysis as it resulted in disproportionality high impacts to residences compared to the other alternatives under consideration. However, east-west improvements may be recommended in

conjunction with the north-south Build Alternatives, and will be considered in the next phase of study, the Environmental Assessment. This analysis will also include the No Build Alternative

It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

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RSVP!! See #3, this project has been going on since the early 1980's. A 55 yr. project!!! Dumber than dumb.

- 1. Road not needed!! A waste of money the state/nation does not have.*
- 2. What will this road bldg. project do to property value?!??*
- 3. Time frame? Why so many studies? Why waste tax paying money on so many studies?*
- 4. How many and where are other IL cities getting a new belt line??*
- 5. Where is an outlet, from my property, onto Towanda Barnes Road? A great concern!!*
- 6. See #3 – A rape of the public.*
- 7. What is the speed limit on this "unneeded road?" No to 45-55, 45-55, 45-55 as Towanda-Barnes is today.*
- 8. Drainage – how would I be involved, the impact of this unneeded project.*
- 9. How many mils have been given to the study firms? Boy, you people are sure feathering your nests. Again, rape of the public!!*
- 10. How can money be spent on a road when the state is "busted." You don't borrow money to get out of debt. You learn to live within your means. With companies moving out of state/country how could you say there will be growth, many lay offs locally. Our church prayer list has 4X5 a wk. of job loss? Answer that.*

Yes, 8-18-11 presented well at our expense. People could not answer questions as presented in this paper. Road is NOT NEEDED!!! How can people from Chicago, LaGrange know how we people feel? Ugh! Dumb thinking. Again, why wasn't Towanda-Barnes built 8 to 10 lanes in the 1990s, where widens? Furnish water at these sessions.

Response: It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

Although many types of environmental resources are studied in the EA, property value impacts are not assessed in detail. This is because property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, many of which that are not related to the proposed transportation project (such as market performance).

The Feasibility Study, the Corridor Study, and the EA are different types of studies with different objectives. At the conclusion of the EA, the preferred alternative will have been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The ESH EA will conclude in early 2014.

We are aware of an East Bypass currently being studied in the Peoria area, and a bypass is being studied in the Alton, Illinois area.

Drainage issues will be evaluated during the EA. During final design (after the Environmental Assessment is complete), coordination with impacted property owners will assist in the identification of field tile locations. Exploration trenching may be conducted on both sides of the right-of-way prior to construction to locate any unknown field tile that may be impacted by the newly constructed roadway. If any are found, they are replaced within the ROW with stronger concrete pipe to protect against the structural load of the new roadway.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.

McLean County Engineer



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This looks like a very large waste of money. My family could not support this.

Response: The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



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Are you sure your proposed routes on the interactive map are correct?! If so, what happens to the Lamplighter subdivision just south of Towanda? Towanda Barnes Road is our only egress from the subdivision....not to mention the highway appears to go right through our subdivision!!!!

Response: Several of the proposed alignments as shown at the August 18, 2011 meeting travel along Towanda Barnes Road west of the Lamplighter Subdivision. Access to and from residential areas including the Lamplighter Subdivision will be maintained. Access provisions will be studied in more detail during the next phase of the analysis.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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Comment: As farfetched as it may seem, I am wondering if any consideration should be made for this to be a below ground highway? Long term cost benefits? No snow to plow, no salt to put down to ruin the concrete, isolated traffic pattern, could go right to airport on its east border. Saves farm land. This is the richest soil in the USA? With the wind farms up and going that is in my opinion going to slow growth. You cannot build a mall or skyscraper next to the wind farms? Kindly, 

Response: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) considers cost when evaluating alternatives, but alternatives are not typically eliminated based solely on cost during environmental analysis. However, when the cost of an underground highway is compared to the other Build Alternatives, the high design and construction cost (in addition to environmental impacts) associated with an underground highway usually renders it not feasible.

*Comment: A recent select analysis of local traffic lights at major intersections revealed a typical minimum cycle time of two minutes. If a driver stops at one of these intersections once per day, every thirty days that driver will have set at a light for one hour.
For a driver who works five days a week, forty-eight weeks per year, that is eight hours per year spent sitting at a red light. If that driver works the same job for twenty years, that adds up to one hundred sixty hours sitting at a red light, enough time, if sitting in a classroom, to get a bachelor's and a master's degree.*

Many resident drivers stop at several lights during the routine of their day. Many, after twenty years driving around town, will have spent close to two thousand hours, (a full "work-year"), if they stop at as few as five traffic lights per day!

Perhaps a capable economist can estimate the aggregate real loss each local resident suffers while sitting at local traffic lights. As well, there are many municipal vehicles in route around town every day, each of which stops several times per day and waits at a traffic light. What real total cost is there to the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal to have employees sitting in vehicles for what may altogether be hundreds of hours per week? One estimate puts Bloomington's minimum cash cost at more than one-half million dollars annually for every 100 vehicles, (five million dollars every ten years).

One real cost everyone suffers is gasoline burning away while at idle. How many thousands of gallons are vaporized locally sitting at stoplights?

How many accidents occur while one driver is innocently sitting at a red light? How many nationally?

Apart from the tragic incalculable human cost of accidents at light controlled intersections, it is possible to very roughly estimate the aggregate "opportunity cost" of sitting at red lights. For instance, it may be 60,000 local residents stop at one two-minute controlled intersection daily, and as a simple prudent indicator, they are paid minimum wage while sitting at the light. This is \$3,759,500 yearly. Now assume, for example, forty per cent of U.S. residents do the same thing: that total is almost \$19-billion annually!

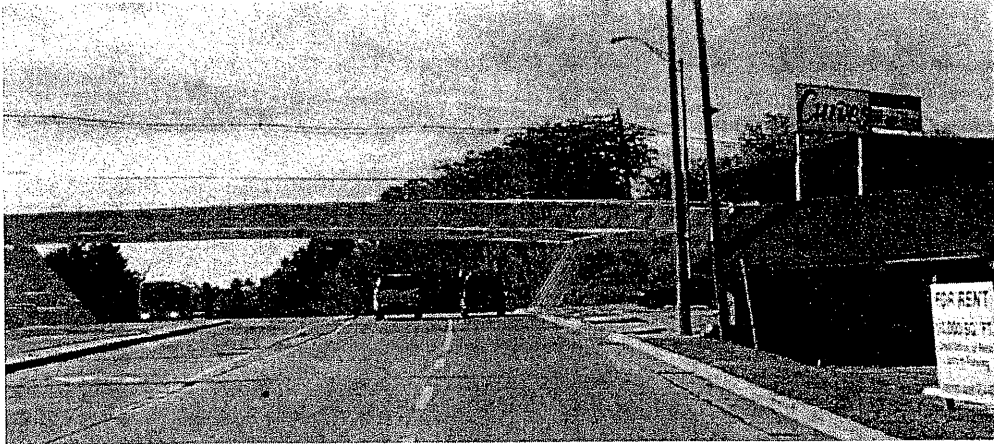
An obvious solution to what some may consider a problem is to prioritize eliminating signal lights whenever possible, even when the short term direct cost is much greater than the easy solution of placing intersections under light control.

There are many opportunities to eliminate traffic control intersections altogether with underpass/overpass constructions and by implementing more limited-control cross-town one-way streets. (Recall that three rights make a left). The effect would be to create by-pass networks enabling expedited cross-town traffic. This would likely also reduce any incentive to avoid delays in traffic by attempting short cuts through service alleys, parking lots, and residential neighborhoods.

For instance, Towanda Avenue offers two convenient opportunities to place an underpass and eliminate the current intersection. One is at Emerson Street and another is at Empire Street. By convenient it is meant that a person standing near those intersections may appreciate that local topography makes it easy to imagine Emerson and Empire crossing over Towanda.



This view shows Towanda Avenue looking south toward Emerson Street with a crossover bridge constructed to eliminate the current intersection.



This view shows Towanda Avenue looking south with Empire Street passing over, eliminating the current intersection.

It is the advantage of hills and ridges offered by local topography that makes crossover construction convenient. This is particularly the case on Veterans Blvd., where Route 9, College Avenue, and Clearwater might be bridged over Veterans, and where Veterans might be bridged over GE Road.

This would reduce the hills on Veterans, increase traffic flow, and eliminate intersections that have been troublesome for many years. Note access to and from Veterans near all of those intersections could be made available via the currently existing service roads along either side.



Looking Northeast over Intersection of East College and Veteran's Parkway

The intersection at College Avenue and Main Street already offers an obvious and convenient opportunity to eliminate that intersection and benefit traffic flow by bridging Main Street over College, as is now the case for pedestrians. And College Avenue may also offer convenience to drivers and pedestrians if it were bridged over University and lowered below School Street. Concern over what traffic will do without those intersections that are eliminated may note there is already at least one obvious alternative to travel through any particular intersection, and only those desiring to turn left or right at a particular intersection will be in any way inconvenienced, if

at all, while all those going forward would then find their travel time and travel risk reduced significantly.

Response: The project team is evaluating a Transportation Systems Management (TSM)/Travel Demand Management (TDM) Alternative. TSM strategies are typically small improvements to the existing transportation system, such as the installation of dedicated turn lanes, construction of spot geometric changes, or the adjustment of signal timing implemented to create a more efficient use of existing facilities and vehicle operation without adding capacity. Some of the strategies would require new ordinances, new transportation studies, and the cooperation of the local municipality, the state, and FHWA when considering changes to state-owned roads and the National Highway System. TDM strategies are policy changes implemented to influence travel behavior, spread travel demand across peak periods, and reduce the demand for single-occupancy vehicle trips. Examples can include alternative work times, ride-sharing, or bicycle incentives. The TSM/TDM alternative will be evaluated along with the Build Alternatives.

I am still reading all the material here and may have missed the answers to these questions. But would like to see them answered going forward.

1. Can this study include a complete history of all the previous studies.

a.) Cost of each study

b.) Reason for the study

c.) Who paid for and requested each study.

d.) Comparison numerically (no graphically) of all the estimates (i.e. Population growth, traffic volume) compared to the actual numbers that occurred.

e.) Did the study result in any RFP's for construction.

f.) Those that did move from a study to actual construction how close was the construction estimates to the actual costs.

Did all the traffic volume counts occur over 24 hours cycles?

Does the traffic counts have total of vehicles by type? (i.e. Cars and motorcycle)

Can the video monitoring of Veteran's Parkway be used with the addition of computer software to do traffic counts on a more regular interval?

Response: The Feasibility Study, the Corridor Study, and the Environmental Assessment (EA) are different types of studies with different objectives. The objective of the 2002 Feasibility Study was to determine if an east side transportation facility to address existing and future transportation conditions was practical and feasible. The objective of the 2007 Corridor Study was to identify a 500 foot wide corridor location for a proposed roadway. The Corridor Study evaluated a range of corridors and identified the location of a recommended corridor. This phase of the study provided a defined corridor that the affected local agencies could use for planning purposes until funding was secured for a complete EA. Much of the Corridor Study work was developed with the understanding that it would be used in the EA. The Corridor Study identified numerous areas where additional detailed studies are needed; these detailed studies will be completed during the EA. The previous studies are available for download on MCRPC's website (<http://www.mcplan.org/transportation/eastside/eastside.html>).

The current study, the EA, evaluates a wide range of alignments and alternatives to determine their impacts on the human and natural environment. The report will identify measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for any adverse impacts. The objective of the EA is to identify a preferred alternative that meets the purpose and need and minimizes environmental impacts. The EA is not a refinement of the Corridor Study's recommended alternative. The EA assesses a full range of transportation improvement alternatives, as well as the No-Action alternative. The corridors previously studied will be examined for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other federal and state policies. Other new alternatives may be identified during the EA process. At the conclusion

of the EA the preferred alternative will have been approved by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

The west side of Bloomington-Normal has an enterprise zone that has already in placed "the west side Veteran's Parkway". That has in place an infrastructure of Mitsubishi Parkway and J C Parkway with at least 5,300 acres of land that has NOT been developed. So much for the "build it and they will come". I fully acknowledge that some of the enterprise zone is not conducive to the subdivision with cul-de-sac approach as the east side of Bloomington-Normal has seen. Yet there are subdivisions that are co-existing with manufacturing, health care and governmental offices. So why do the developers need to have the taxpayers pay for more infrastructure so they can take up more farm land and then safe themselves the costs of paying for their own infrastructure. If more effort would be placed on growing what is already in place maybe we can get that empty fire station put in use The fees for those new building where residential or commercial to tap into the water and sewer that is already to go would be income for the local government. There is plenty of access and mobility on the western areas of Bloomington-Normal. Seems the EDC, City of Bloomington, Town of Normal and Mc Lean County are washing their hands of "build it and they will come". I would say learn from history and not try the same thing for the "East Side Highway" that many are trying to now market as the needed corridor. How about we count the chickens we have bought and paid for before trying to hatch new ones.

Response: The ESH Environmental Assessment (EA) is being planned in accordance with the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The ESH is not being planned to encourage additional development outside of the 2035 Land Use Plan limits. Alternatives screening for the ESH has considered how the ESH could influence urban sprawl, and alternatives that have the highest potential for influencing urban sprawl or leapfrog development have been removed from the range of alternatives to study in the EA because they are not consistent with the goals of the study.

Can the study clarify if the area is chosen for the "East Side Highway" makes it easier and less costly for utility companies such as Enbridge to then purchase access rights after the State takes over the "corridor".

Response: One component of the study is to investigate the placement of utilities within a future ESH. If a pipeline plan is adopted, the location will be considered along with the full range of alternatives. It is important to note, however, that location must work with the Purpose and Need.

The study should include from a variety of sources the total number of residential lots that are available for both Bloomington and Normal, an inventory of the number of homes and the average number of individuals that may occupy those lots. Multifamily and single family should be broken out. In addition if the housing is geared for any of the three colleges or not. Would also like to see the same type of inventory of square feet for commercial and manufacturing. This should give us an idea how much inventory is available and how many years it will take to run out of the current inventory.

Response: Future land use utilization and projections have been completed for Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County. Please refer to the McLean County Regional Planning Commission website (www.mcplan.org) to review the City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan, and the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Land use assessment of the ESH alternatives is based upon these comprehensive plans and their land use analyses. For questions pertaining to land use planning, please contact the appropriate local and regional agencies.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer

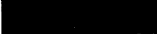


HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

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Good day! Thank for providing the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal. As a new resident to the area, I was drawn to this specific area of town due to the focus on preserving the environment as well as to the focus of creating a neighborhood atmosphere. With a family of three young children, it was important to my husband and I that we select a safe location, and a location that is away from the tremendous traffic in other areas of town. We are opposed to the proposal as it raises safety and noise concerns and also has the ability to negatively impact home sales in the area. Team - please head back to the drawing board.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Safety is an important component of the ESH project. The proximity to schools and areas such as parks is considered and safety will be studied. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and neighbors in mind. Projected noise levels and potential impacts at sensitive noise receptors (e.g., homes, parks) are investigated during the next level of alternative analysis, the Environmental Assessment. A detailed noise analysis which follows federal and state guidelines will be performed for the remaining alternatives. Where noise impacts are determined, mitigation measures such as noise walls may be recommended, as appropriate. Where noise walls are recommended, affected homeowners will be given opportunity for input.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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I have attached my comment form from the August 18th meeting to be included in the official record. Thank you, [REDACTED]

I support the no-build alternative. I cannot understand why the trendline utilized for predicting growth does not account for the recent economic situation and most recent actions by employers in town. If the highway is to be built, it would make the most sense to place it as close to Towanda Barnes as possible, the western-most option available. It would follow the straightest route, be the farthest distance from children and the school, and place it with the greatest access to Bloomington-Normal via exits. If the eastern option is used, it will place the highway next to an area with the highest percentage of children, next to the school, and away from Bloom/Normal, which could impact commerce from area travelers. A majority of residents are not in support of the highway, and I recommend as part of the analysis that a survey be taken in order to truly understand the want and need of a project on this scale.

Response: It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for

employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road (referred to as Section BN1) results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Section BN1 were eliminated during the Macro Analysis Evaluation. The recommended location of an ESH will be determined based upon numerous environmental impacts and engineering considerations. The distance of the ESH to existing roads, such as Towanda Barnes Road, is one of many considerations addressed during the evaluation process.

Safety is an important component of the ESH. The proximity to schools and areas such as parks is considered and safety will be studied. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and neighbors in mind.

The EA will contain a summary of all public comments received during the ESH project development process; please refer to the draft EA when it is completed for a summary of public comments and opinions regarding the project.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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I have attached my comment form to be included in the meeting from August 18th. Thank you,
[REDACTED]

The presentation and study have not fully accounted for the recent drop in employment and population for Bloomington-Normal. The trend line used focus on trending 1985-2000, yet the more recent trend showcases a very gradual increase. At this time it does not appear that future growth necessitates an Eastside Highway. The project assumes there is currently no way to bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The creation of the west-side by-pass has, more or less, boxed the cities in on the west side for development. The Eastside has grown with more new housing due to not having a highway. The Grove was created for families and children to be able to enjoy the countryside and nature, not be dodging cars on a highway or with the increased noise. I favor the no-build option because I do not see the need. If a corridor is chosen, I would only support building as close to Towanda-Barnes as possible and farthest from the school, option 1 along Towanda-Barnes. Employment in McLean County only grew by 1.5% between 2000 & 2010. We should be focusing on improving our current infrastructure in a more efficient and steadfast manner.

Response: It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

Safety is an important component of the ESH. The proximity to schools and areas such as parks is considered and safety will be studied. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and neighbors in mind.

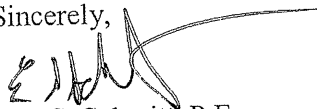
Projected noise levels and potential impacts at sensitive noise receptors (e.g., homes, parks) are investigated during the next level of alternative analysis, the Environmental Assessment. A detailed noise analysis which follows federal and state guidelines will be performed for the remaining alternatives. Where noise impacts are determined, mitigation measures such as noise walls may be recommended, as appropriate. Where noise walls are recommended, affected homeowners will be given opportunity for input.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road (referred to as Section BN1) results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Section BN1 were eliminated during the Macro Analysis Evaluation. The recommended location of an ESH will be determined based upon numerous environmental impacts and engineering considerations. The distance of the ESH to existing roads, such as Towanda Barnes Road, is one of many considerations addressed during the evaluation process.

The No Build Alternative will be studied along with the recommended Build Alternatives in the EA. In order for the No Build Alternative to be selected as the Preferred Alternative, it must meet the project's Purpose & Need – to accommodate growth and improve local and regional mobility and access or demonstrate that it is a more feasible option compared to the Build Alternatives. The travel performance of the No Build and the various Build Alternatives will be compared and documented.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

To whom it may concern we have the following comments/concerns regarding the proposed east side highway.

Location To School - I don't understand why one of the proposals would even be considered, since it would be placed directly next to an elementary school. The safety of our children should be a top priority in the community.

Population estimates - The population estimates don't seem realistic. This community experienced tremendous growth in the past. As of right now the major employers in this community are not expanding as they did in the past. There are also no indicators that this will be changing in the near future. I don't believe that we will be close to your population estimates by the year 2035. Thus the need for the road may never be there.

Public support – every large project seems to have people arguing for and against it. I have yet to speak to anyone who feels it is necessary to build this highway.

Location – If a new east side road is necessary, it seems the most logical and cost effective solution would be to upgrade Towanda Barnes road. It is an established roadway that connects both interstates and allows easy access to everything on the east side. This would also have the least affect on neighborhoods, farms, and farm land.

3 available options at this point - If any new roads need to be built, it would seem logical to establish it close to Towanda Barnes road due to reasons listed above.

The residents of Grove 2 concerns - One of the new proposals appear to be directly next to the properties on Staghorne Way. I can't believe the developers could sell lots on this street knowing this was a possibility and legally not divulge that information or that the property directly east of the Grove 2 could be re-zoned like this? This would drastically reduce the property values of everyone in that area.

Communication plan – I would not announce a plan until it is completely decided on when and where it will be built. If a “leading” plan is communicated at this point, everyone’s home values would immediately drop significantly. What if the population of the community does not grow close to your predictions and the road is never built? It is not fair to the homeowners to suffer that loss for a road that may never be built or be built elsewhere.

Thank you for your time.

Response: Safety is an important component of the ESH. The proximity to schools and areas such as parks is considered and safety will be studied. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and neighbors in mind.

It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

The EA will also contain a summary of all public comments received during the ESH project development process; please refer to the draft EA when it is completed for a summary of public comments and opinions regarding the project.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road (referred to as Section BN1) results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Section BN1 were eliminated during the Macro Analysis Evaluation. The recommended location of an ESH will be determined based upon numerous environmental impacts and engineering considerations. The distance of the ESH to existing roads, such as Towanda Barnes Road, is one of many considerations addressed during the evaluation process.

The alternative proposed east of Staghorne Way is one of numerous alternatives proposed by the Community Working Group (CWG). The CWG is comprised of citizens of the community representing numerous interest areas such as emergency services, agriculture, homeowners, laborers,

etc. The CWG is one component of a public involvement process called Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). One important component of CSS is transparency of process. We strive to present all information relating to the alternatives analysis process in a clear manner so the public understands how decisions were made. For this reason, all alternatives initially developed have been presented to the public. Additionally, full public disclosure of the project process (including all alternatives identified) is required as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the federal law that governs the development of the EA.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

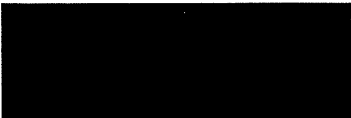
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 3

Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

In these times of NO MONEY and the State of Illinois unable to pay its bills, it seems ridiculous that a highway project is even being thought about for a small rural community such as Bloomington/Normal. Money would be better spent fixing what is run down and broken as to starting another project.

Fix the bridges and roads that need desperate repair rather than this idiot plan of another way "around" this city.

Response: The funding for the ESH EA study comes from the *Illinois Jobs Now!* capitol bill and cannot be used to repair existing infrastructure. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer

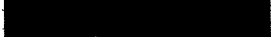


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December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting / 3

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No build.

No build.

No build.

No build.

Too many if's.

Too many if's.

Too many if's.

No build.

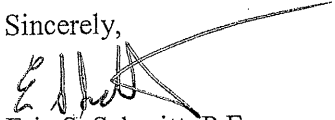
No build.

Hope you can read this!

Response: The No Build Alternative will be studied along with the recommended Build Alternatives in the EA. In order for the No Build Alternative to be selected as the Preferred Alternative, it must meet the project's Purpose & Need – to accommodate growth and improve local and regional mobility and access or demonstrate that it is a more feasible option compared to the Build Alternatives. The travel performance of the No Build and the various Build Alternatives will be compared and documented.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right across the top of the signature.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 23

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

The employment and population growth from the 2006 study (2035 projections) for current #'s as presented showed that the growth was significantly less than projected. Why do you continue to believe that data? Interestingly, I printed & attached here a Pantagraph article from 9-30-2008 which states "the route is about ½ mile east of T-B Rd. and similar to the area map out nearly six years ago. When the East side Hwy was proposed initially. By 2003 that road – then called the east-side by pass – was shelved because the public did not support it." What has changed? The public still does not support it. My family does not want this road because it will be right behind our house. It also goes through prime farmland. Obviously, you didn't ask the residents and farmers that it directly affects. We are tired of being ignored! Stop wasting money on this project. Fix the roads we have. Look for expanded alternatives – bus routes, etc. It is laughable to hear how many car hours per day this will save. How much gas will it save when the cars are going faster? Does it really make a difference if it takes 20 minutes to drive across town or 15 min.? with the Hwy? No it doesn't. The population estimates are inaccurate as proven over the last 5 yrs. (21,000) fewer than estimated. Also fewer jobs – Do you think that magically we are really going to see pre-recession job/population growth any time in the next 10-15 yrs.? I don't.

Response: Thank you for your comment. It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at

the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

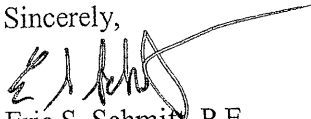
One goal of the ESH study is to select an alternative that meets the project's Purpose and Need and also minimizes community and environmental impacts, including impacts to residences and prime farmland.

The funding for the ESH EA study comes from the *Illinois Jobs Now!* capitol bill and cannot be used to repair existing infrastructure.

Without any roadway improvements, stand-alone transit alternatives would not satisfy the project's Purpose and Need. However, transit may provide merits as an integral part of the highway improvements being considered for the project and will be further evaluated as alignments are refined and design progresses.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.

McLean County Engineer



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December 13, 2011

[REDACTED]

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 73

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

As retired assistant chief of the Towanda Community Fire Protection District (fire, rescue, EMS) I am concerned that 40% of the members reside in Lamplight Subdivision (only access is Towanda-Barnes Road, County 29). The station is on the Northwest edge of Towanda (just off the exit 171 interchange). Typically it takes 5 minutes for the volunteers to respond to the station. Most of the alternatives are within the TCFPD response area.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Emergency services' access to individual residences and subdivisions is an important consideration in the EA development. The Community Working Group, a group of local stakeholders that has been working with the project team since 2010, includes a member of emergency services in addition to police and fire representatives. Their input has been considered as the alternatives have been developed and these representatives will continue to provide input as the alternatives to be studied are refined. Additional emergency service personnel may be contacted as necessary as alternatives to be studied in the EA are identified. The safe and efficient travel of emergency services will be maintained.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

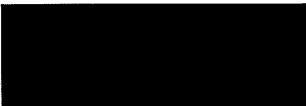
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 73

Dear 

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Our subdivision (Eagle View South) would be disrupted by the option closest to Towanda Barnes. We are expected to get a city park which would be right next to this option. This would be very dangerous to all the children in the neighborhood. I believe the furthest option to the east CR2100E would be the best option when thinking of all the residences that are being built on the east side. I also believe a no build option going N/S would be fine and agree with helping improve the E/W transportation.

Response: Thank you for your comment. One goal of the ESH study is to select an alternative that meets the project's Purpose and Need and also minimizes community and environmental impacts. The project team will consider all park areas and will contact local and regional agencies to obtain information pertaining to the proposed park near Eagle View South. During the screening of alternatives, avoiding impacts to existing parks is considered an important criterion, as parks are protected property. Safety is also an important component of the ESH project. The proximity to schools and areas such as parks is considered and safety will be studied. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and neighbors in mind.

The range of alternatives that remain under consideration includes a No Build Alternative and numerous North-South Build Alternatives. Additionally, east-west improvements may be recommended in conjunction with the north-south Build Alternatives, and will be considered in the

next phase of study, the Environmental Assessment. An East-West Only Alternative was considered and eliminated during the Macro Analysis as it resulted in disproportionality high impacts to residences compared to the other alternatives under consideration.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmit', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmit, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

December 13, 2011

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting **73**

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

If you build a road in the field then I will be so mad. – Andria

When Andria was a baby we lived on a busy street near a hospital. Ambulances woke her up a lot at night time. She remembers this and said that she doesn't want this road to be built near our house because she doesn't like the noise.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Projected noise levels and potential impacts at sensitive noise receptors (e.g., homes, parks) are investigated during the next level of alternative analysis, the Environmental Assessment. A detailed noise analysis which follows federal and state guidelines will be performed for the remaining alternatives. Where noise impacts are determined, mitigation measures such as noise walls may be recommended, as appropriate. Where noise walls are recommended, affected homeowners will be given opportunity for input.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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December 13, 2011

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting *73*

Dear [REDACTED]

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BN3 appears to be the least invasive to existing development. While it's the eastern most, it is the one I'd favor.

BN1 or BN2 would've been a great alternative a decade ago prior to the development that has happened since 2000.

I would even reconsider the eliminated option that was slightly to the east of Towanda and Downs. It would be minimally invasive but allow for growth along Blm/County's east sides for the next decade.

Madison WI is a great model. Their construction of a south and west beltline was a great model that was very successful.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The ESH is being planned in accordance with the 2035 Land Use Plan. Impacts to existing development will be minimized when feasible.

One goal of the ESH study is to select an alternative that meets the project's Purpose and Need and also minimizes community and environmental impacts. Widening Towanda Barnes Road (referred to as Section BN1) results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and

parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Section BN1 were eliminated during the Macro Analysis Evaluation.

The alternatives to the east of Towanda and Downs were eliminated during the Purpose & Need Evaluation and Macro Analysis Evaluation. The easternmost alternatives were less consistent with the project's Purpose & Need because they were less effective at improving local and regional mobility and access compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Several of the easternmost alternatives resulted in disproportionately high farmland impacts compared to the other alternatives.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.

McLean County Engineer



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December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting **2 3**

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Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Another boondoggle. Please stop wasting money on this East Side Highway project. Your population projections are inaccurate. The job/traffic flow is incorrectly predicted. We don't need a new highway. The government does not have the money to waste on this nonsense.

I initially wrote some comments immediately after the meeting. However, after 12 hours of thinking about this public forum, I want to say. First off, it was interesting to note that the population projections in 2006 for 2011 missed by over 18,000 people. That is 18,000 less people than forecasted. That indicates to me this project could/should be terminated. Secondly, who is in favor of this new road? Could you please provide a list of those people that is/are in favor of this new road? According to the engineers projections there is no way currently that Towanda-Barnes could not be expanded to six lanes from Towanda to Downs. The excuse is that too many people will be impacted. Regardless, of where you build this road, you will impact farmers/landowners/environment etc. How long (years) have you been looking at this project? How many years has it been? Why not cancel the project and quit wasting time and money on this. The road is not needed. The populations projections are much lower now in 2011 (once the numbers were figured from the census). This massive growth in my Grove subdivision has been a myth. This subdivision started 6 six years with a projected plot of homes of being slightly more than 900 homes in 10 years. Currently, we have slightly more than 200 homes. There is absolutely no way that 700 houses will be built and sold in the next four years. Once again, hyper inflated housing numbers that have not materialized. The bottom line is this; please strongly consider the one common sense option that is viable. Please do not build the road at all. The population numbers have proven to be fictitious. There is no need to build the road. If it is built, please another twenty five years to see exactly what the population is, the traffic flow patterns and the number of

people actually commuting to work will be far less in 2035 than it is today. Please respond to my questions and comments in a timely fashion. If a road is built it should be currently be the road the one farthest east and east of Benjamin Elementary School. A road should not bisect the Grove from Towanda Barnes. There is no viable need for a road!!

Response: It is recognized that the recent economic downturn has caused employment to decline in McLean County, in the State of Illinois, and in the U.S. As stated at the August meeting, the population and employment forecasts were revised in light of the recent economic downturn. Even with revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for this project.

As the EA progresses, the most current national, state, and local census data and employment/population trends will be used to ensure that the growth rates are credible. The project team continues to monitor various resources to verify the forecasts. Additional sources used for employment forecasting include Woods & Poole Economic and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, with the latter providing monthly updates of employment conditions.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the highway construction schedule can be adjusted.

The No Build Alternative will be studied along with the recommended Build Alternatives in the EA. In order for the No Build Alternative to be selected as the Preferred Alternative, it must meet the project's Purpose & Need – to accommodate growth and improve local and regional mobility and access or demonstrate that it is a more feasible option compared to the Build Alternatives. The travel performance of the No Build and the various Build Alternatives will be compared and documented.

One goal of the ESH study is to select an alternative that meets the project's Purpose and Need and also minimizes community and environmental impacts. Widening Towanda Barnes Road (referred to as Section BN1) results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Section BN1 were eliminated during the Macro Analysis Evaluation.

Access to and from residential areas, including The Grove, are currently being examined and will be considered in the EA. Improving access between urban areas/ job centers and residential areas is a key component of the Purpose and Need, and will be evaluated and described more fully in the EA document.

The EA will also contain a summary of all public comments received during the ESH project development process; please refer to the draft EA when it is completed for a summary of public comments and opinions regarding the project.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.

McLean County Engineer



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December 13, 2011

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting *73*

Dear [REDACTED]

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LeRoy is a fast growing community. Please consider ease of access for commuters to Bloomington/Normal. Currently Route 9 and 150 provide simple access to South & East B.N. The thought of an expressway is daunting unless overpasses are provided. Making the new East side something similar to South US 51 is more desirable to me. No or few stops, plenty of access along the way, but still straight-a-way for a nice long distance at a high pace, equal to the Interstate.

Response: The ESH is being planned to accommodate regional and local traffic traveling to businesses, residential areas, and job centers. The project team is currently analyzing data, including existing and future traffic patterns, to determine the ultimate facility type (e.g., arterial, expressway, or freeway) and level of access for the ESH. That information will be presented at a Public Information Meeting, tentatively scheduled for January 2012. You will be added to the mailing list and notified of upcoming public meetings.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

December 13, 2011



Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting *73*

Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

If completed, needs to be as far East as possible. As a resident of Eagle View, the alternative close to our subdivision would ruin the neighborhood.

It is also too close to Towanda Barnes Road.

Response: Community and neighborhood impacts were evaluated according to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Community Impact Assessment Manual during the initial screening of alternatives. Alternatives that divided or isolated communities were eliminated; however, alternatives that were close to neighborhoods or residences were carried forward to the next level of analysis.

Alternatives were developed to minimize impacts to resources including residences. Alternatives with disproportionately high residential impacts were screened early in the evaluation process. Specific impacts to residences will be determined during the next stage of analysis when recommended alternatives are refined in the Environmental Assessment.

The recommended location of an ESH will be determined based upon numerous environmental impacts and engineering considerations. The distance of the ESH to existing roads, such as Towanda Barnes Road, is one of many considerations addressed during the evaluation process.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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December 13, 2011

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting *73*

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I am in Lamplighter Subdivision – one block in. I travel to town in 6 min. to Country Companies down Towanda – Barnes & 6E Rd. I can currently get there quicker than my co-workers trying to cross Veteran's Parkway. I rarely use the highway. This would not improve my travel time at all.

I do not like the idea of the highway splitting between Normal & Towanda. It will kill the town of Towanda. I do not want a highway out my front door or an exit ramp.

I am concerned about the value of the homes in Lamplighter being destroyed.

I don't like the idea of a highway between Towanda & the high school.

What will be done for those whose homes are in the way? Please spare Towanda/Lamplighter Subdivision.

Response: The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Several of the proposed alignments shown at the August 18, 2011 meeting use Towanda Barnes Road west of the Lamplighter Subdivision. Access between Normal and Towanda and between Towanda and the high school would be maintained.

Alternatives were developed to minimize impacts to resources including residences. Alternatives with disproportionately high residential impacts were screened early in the evaluation process. Specific impacts to residences will be determined during the next stage of analysis when recommended alternatives are refined in the Environmental Assessment.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING #4

JANUARY 11, 2012

NOTICE
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the East Side Highway Steering Committee will hold a Public Information Meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at the Normal Community High School Auditorium at 3900 East Raab Road in Normal, Illinois. The meeting will be held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to update the public on the alternative evaluation process to date, identify the remaining alignments to be studied in detail, and discuss roadway facility type. A presentation will be made at 6:10 PM and again at 7:10 PM. The presentations will be identical. The remainder of the meeting will be open-house format with opportunity to review exhibits. Project team staff will be available for discussion and questions.

A map of the remaining corridors will be available on the project website (<http://www.eastsidehighway.com>) prior to the meeting. Persons with disability requiring special accommodations should contact Clark Dietz, Inc. (217-373-8900) to advise of planned attendance and needed accommodations.

East Side Highway Environmental Assessment Public Meeting Announcement



You are invited to attend an East Side Highway Public Information Meeting to be held on:

DATE

Wednesday, January 11, 2012

TIME

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

PLACE

Normal Community High School
3900 East Raab Road
Normal, Illinois

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting is to present the alternative evaluation process to date, and identify the remaining alignments.

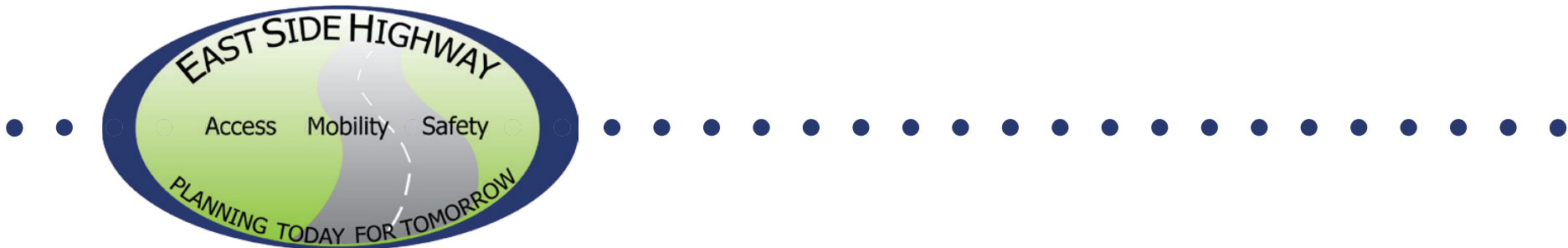
A presentation will be given at 6:10 p.m. and 7:10 p.m. The content at each presentation will be identical. The presentation will include an overview of the alternative evaluation process, identification of the remaining alignments, and a discussion of roadway facility type. The remainder of the meeting will be open-house format with opportunity to browse exhibits. Staff will be available for discussion and questions. Comments will be taken at the meeting, and by mail, email, or fax after the meeting. For more information, visit the website at www.eastsidehighway.com.



Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations should contact Mr. Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz at (217) 373-8900 to advise of planned attendance and needed accommodations.

East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
125 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE



VISIT

WWW.EASTSIDEHIGHWAY.COM





WELCOME!

DATE Wednesday, January 11, 2012

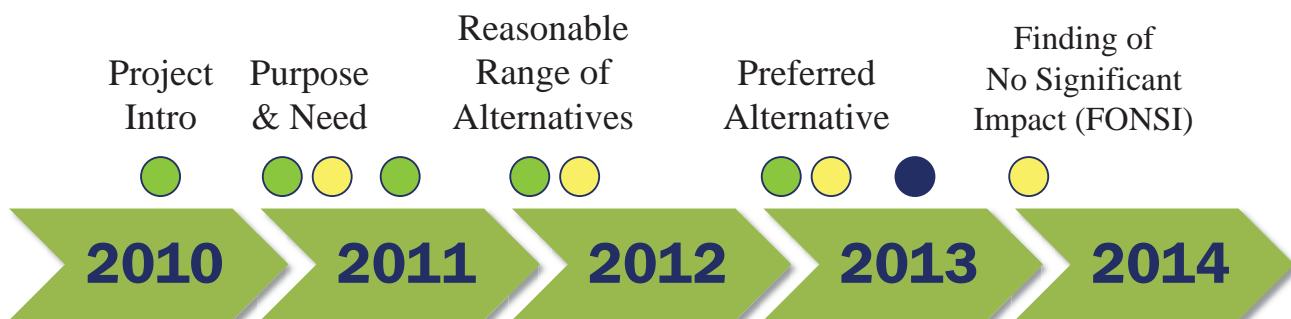
AGENDA An identical, brief presentation will be given at the following times:

6:10 p.m.

7:10 p.m.

Purpose
The purpose of the meeting is to present the alternative development and evaluation process to date.

TIMELINE

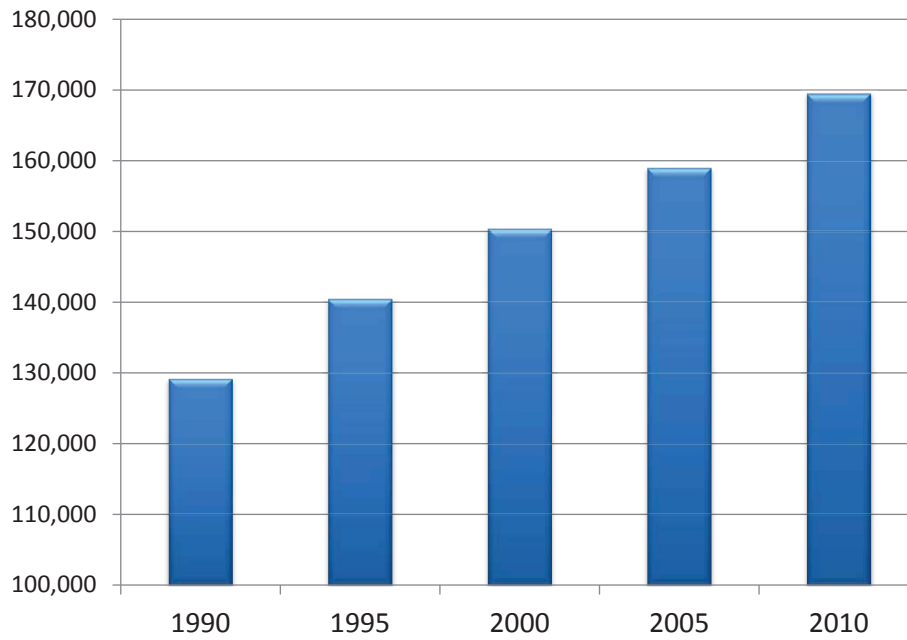


- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing

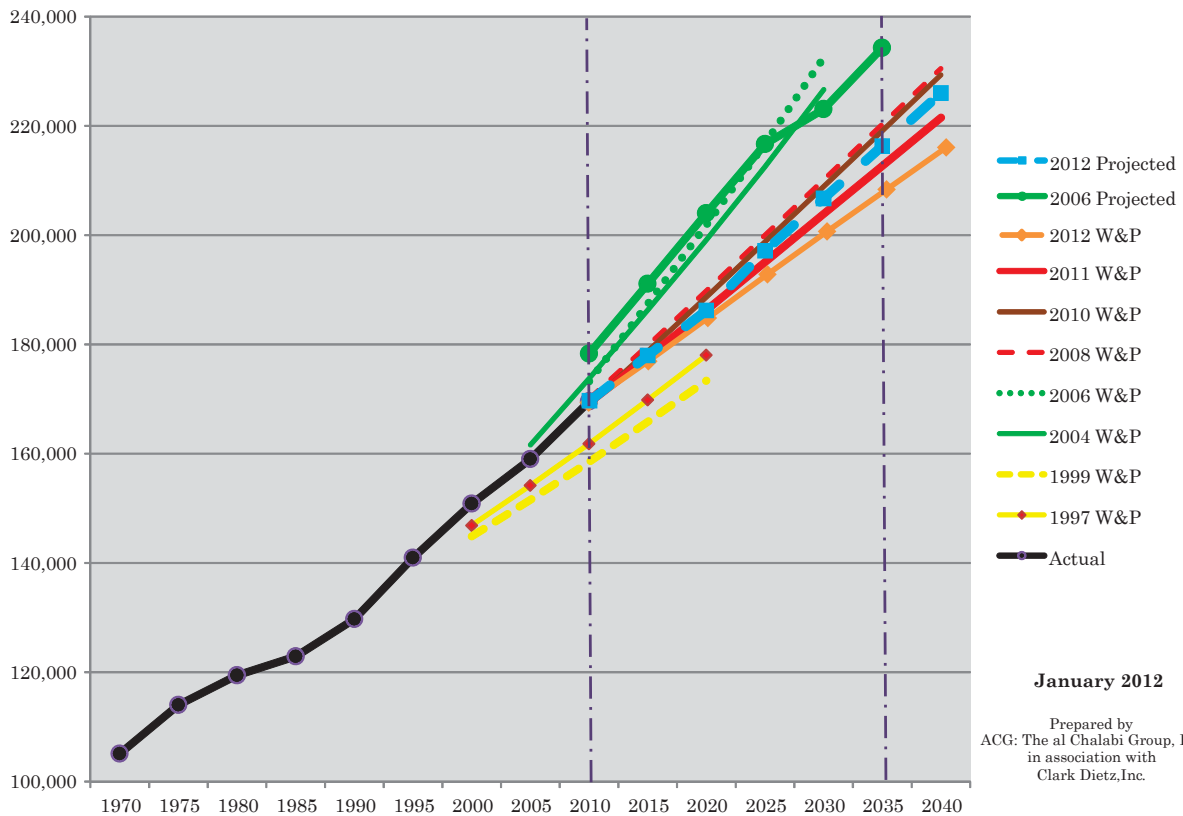


POPULATION CHANGE

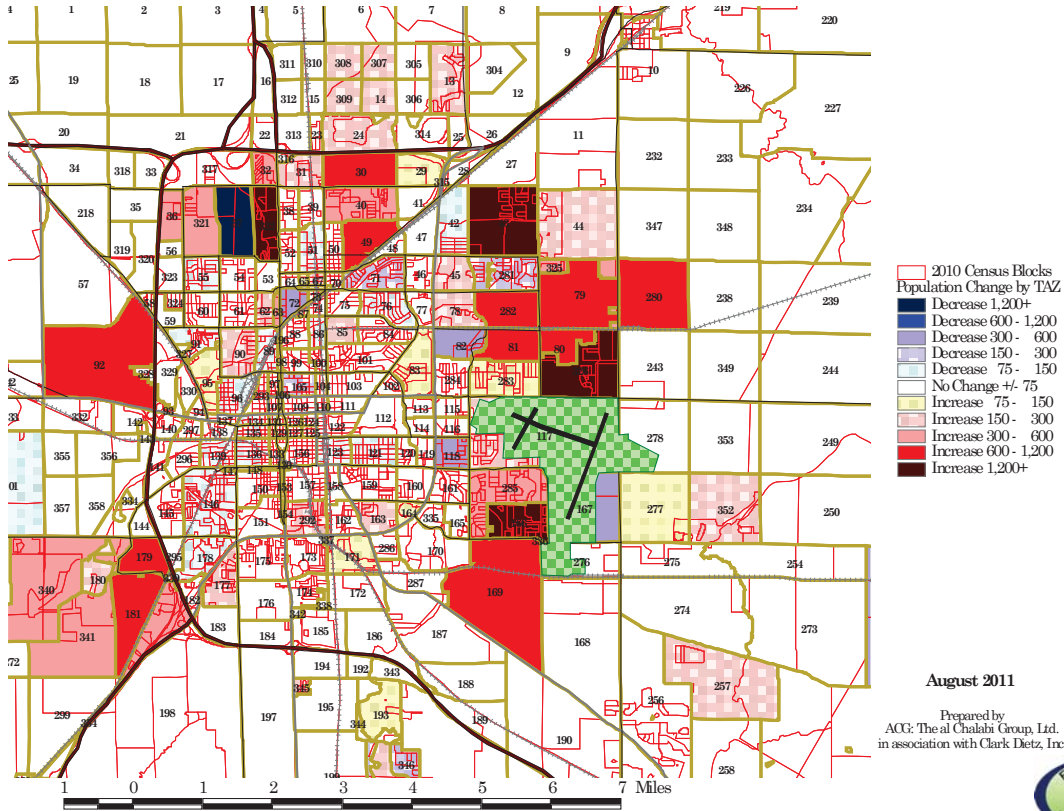
McLean County Population



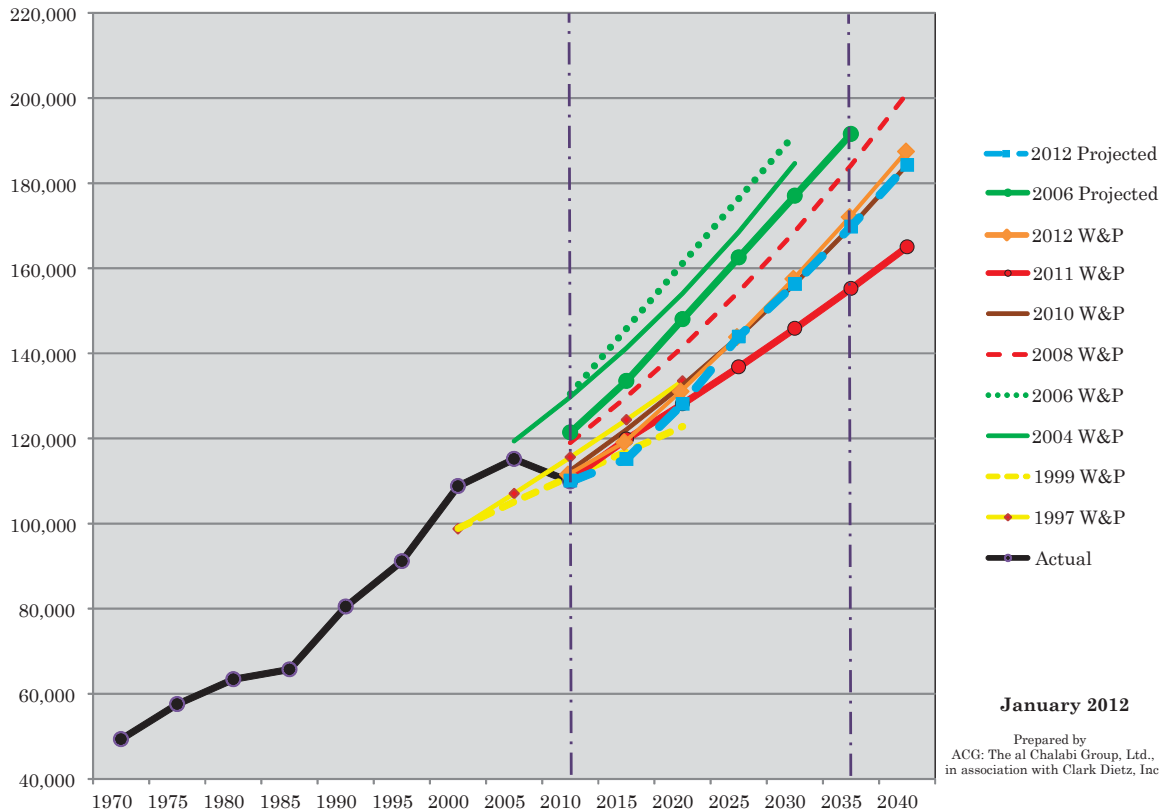
POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



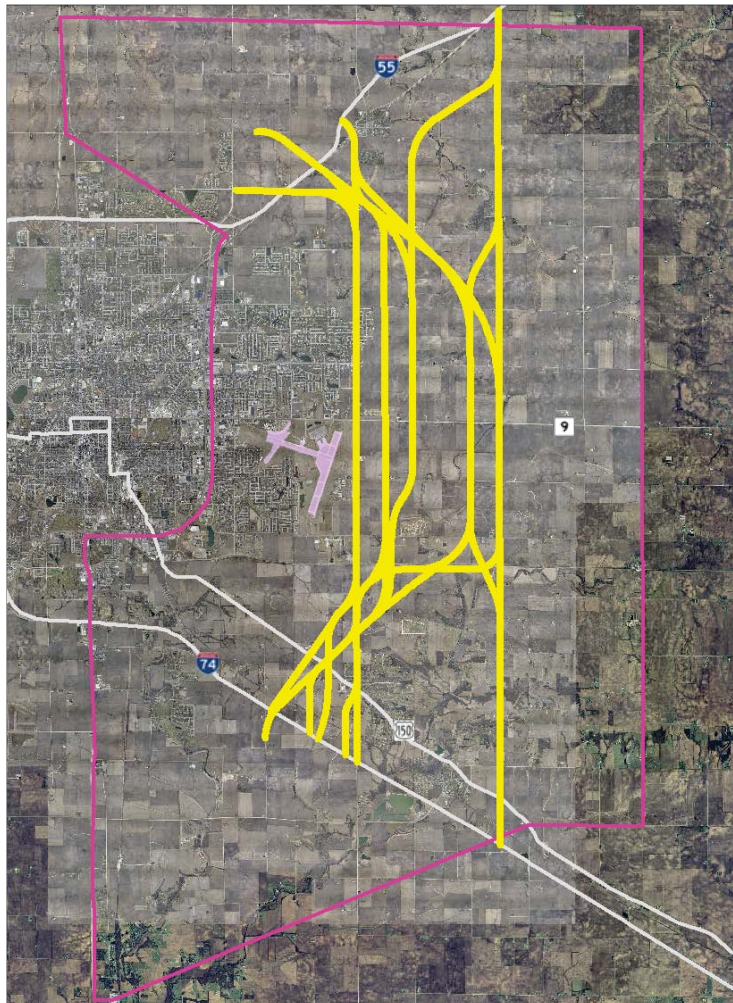
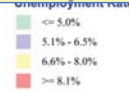
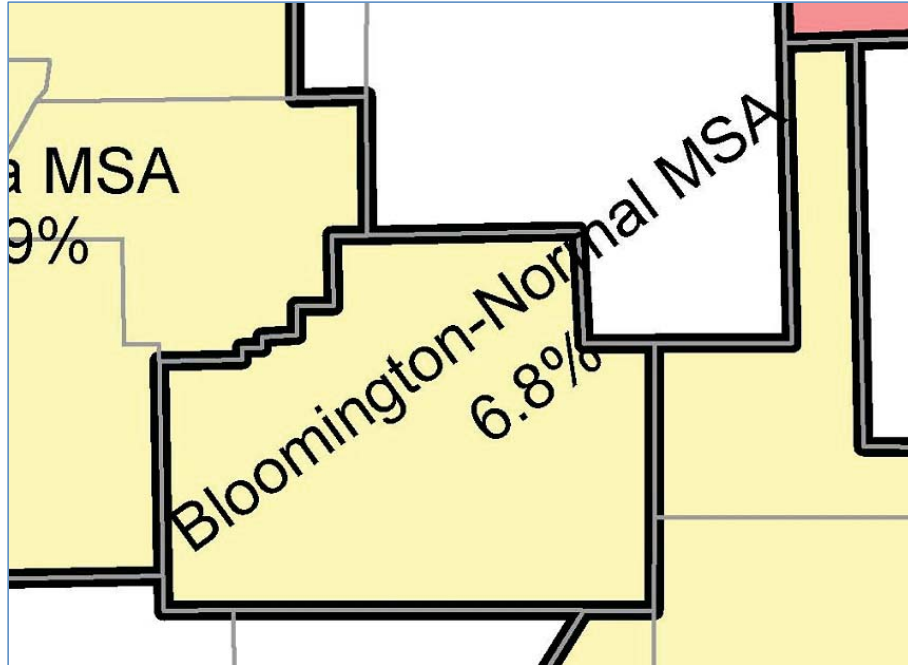
POPULATION CHANGE 2000-2010



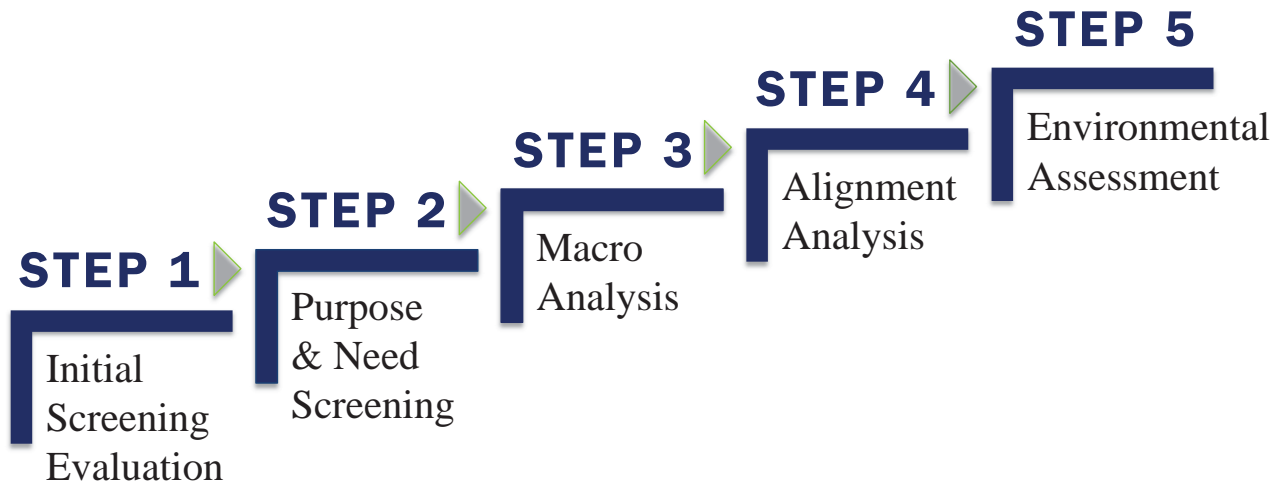
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS AND FORECASTS



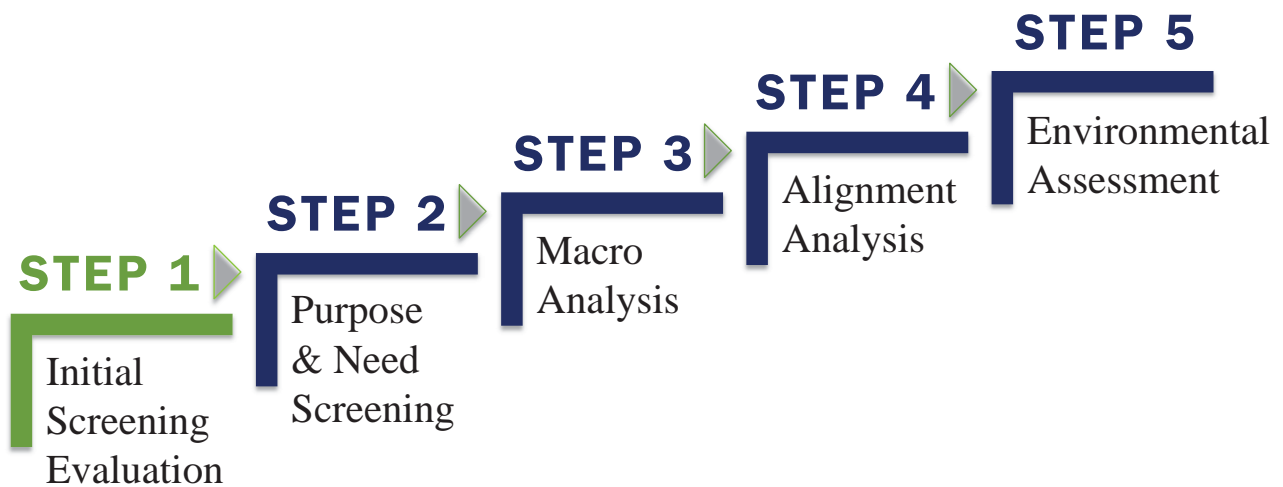
SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVES

**Transportation
Systems
Management/
Travel Demand
Management**

**Transit
Alternative**

**East-West
Alternative**

**No-Build
Alternative**



TSM/TDM ALTERNATIVE

Transportation Systems Management (TSM)

- Minor improvements to the existing system
- Make existing facilities more efficient
- Do not add capacity

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

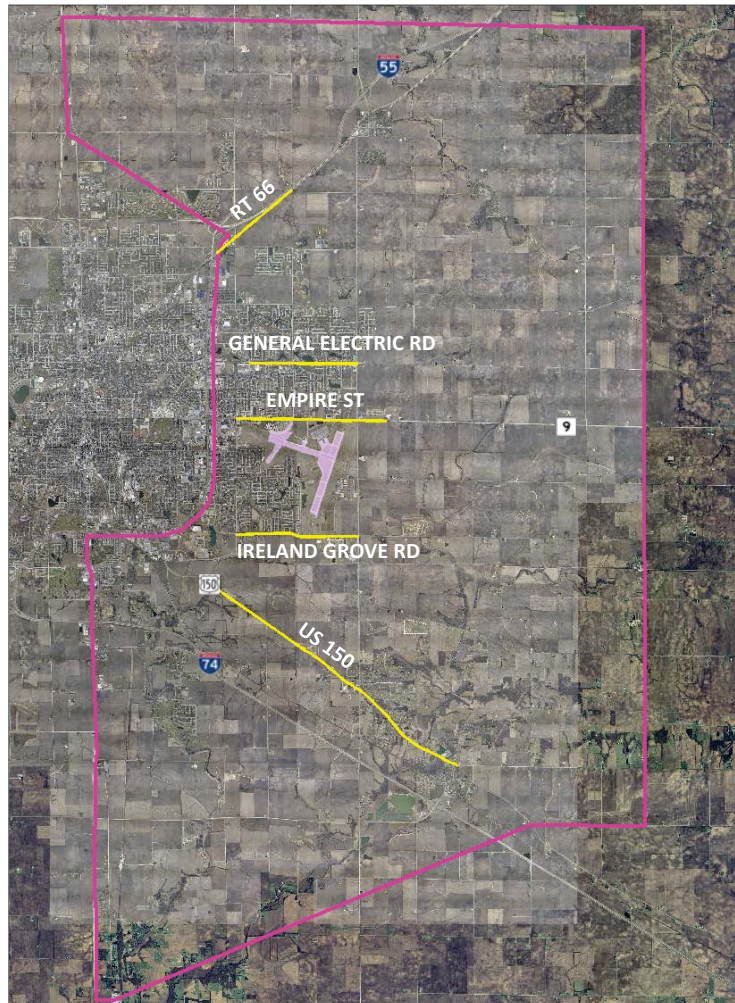
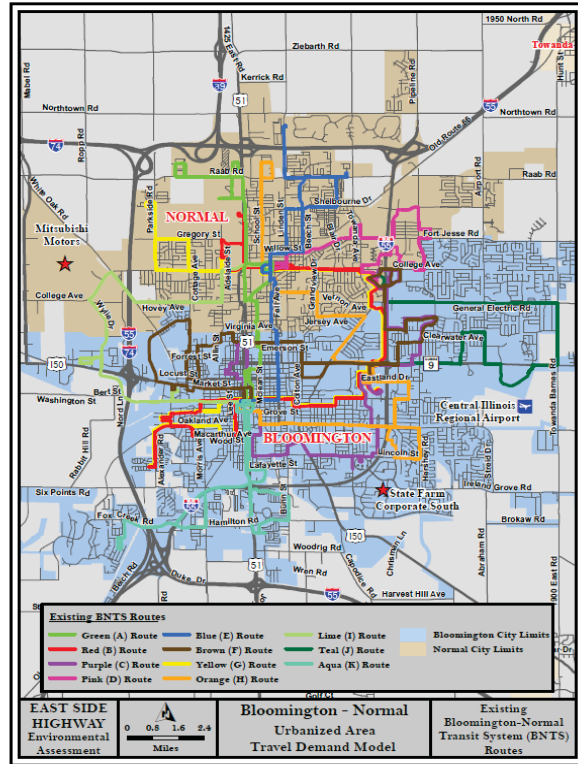
- Policy changes or actions
- Influence travel behavior, reduce demand
- May already be in use OR may be planned for future



TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE

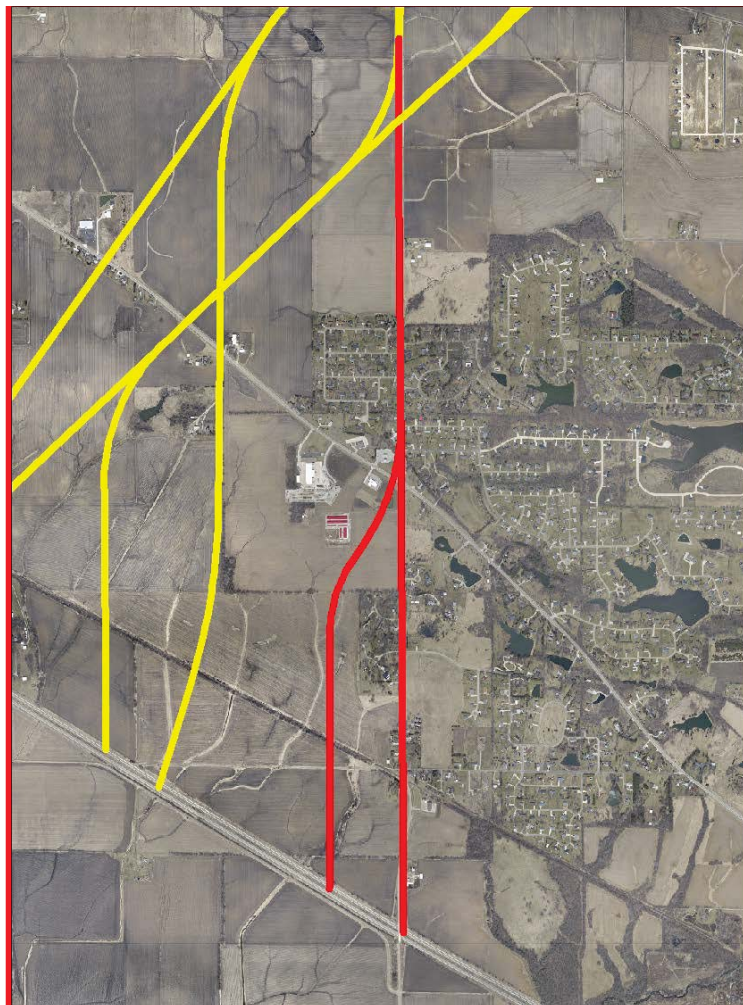
Existing Service

- 11 fixed local bus routes
- SHOW BUS
- 5,000 riders/day
- Limited east side service
- Intercity bus (Greyhound, Burlington Trailways & Peoria Charter Coach)
- Passenger rail (Amtrak)
- **Less than 1% of all trips is by transit**

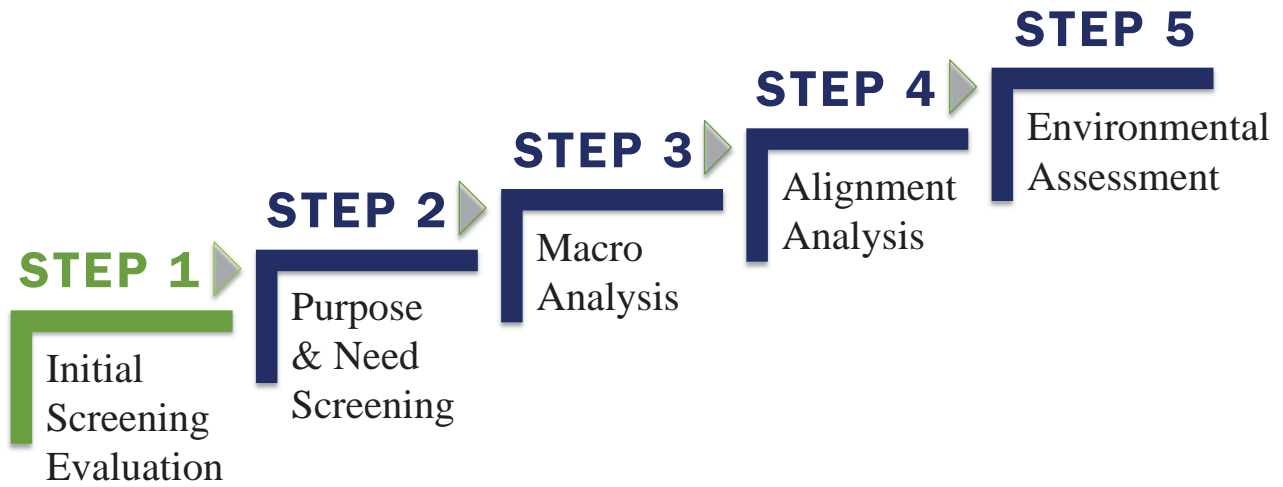


INITIAL SCREENING CRITERIA

1. Does the alternative directly impact State/Federally protected areas?
2. Does the alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport?
3. Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (follows IDOT Community Impact Assessment)



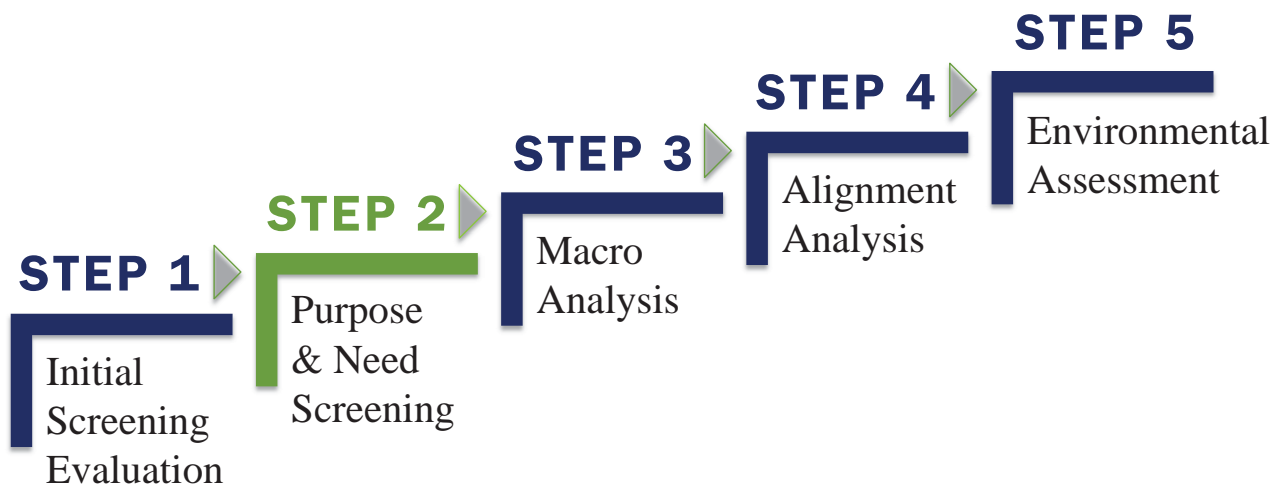
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



129



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



129 →

93



PURPOSE & NEED SCREENING

METRICS

Accommodate
Managed Growth

Area between 2035 Land Use Plan and Alternative

Mobility

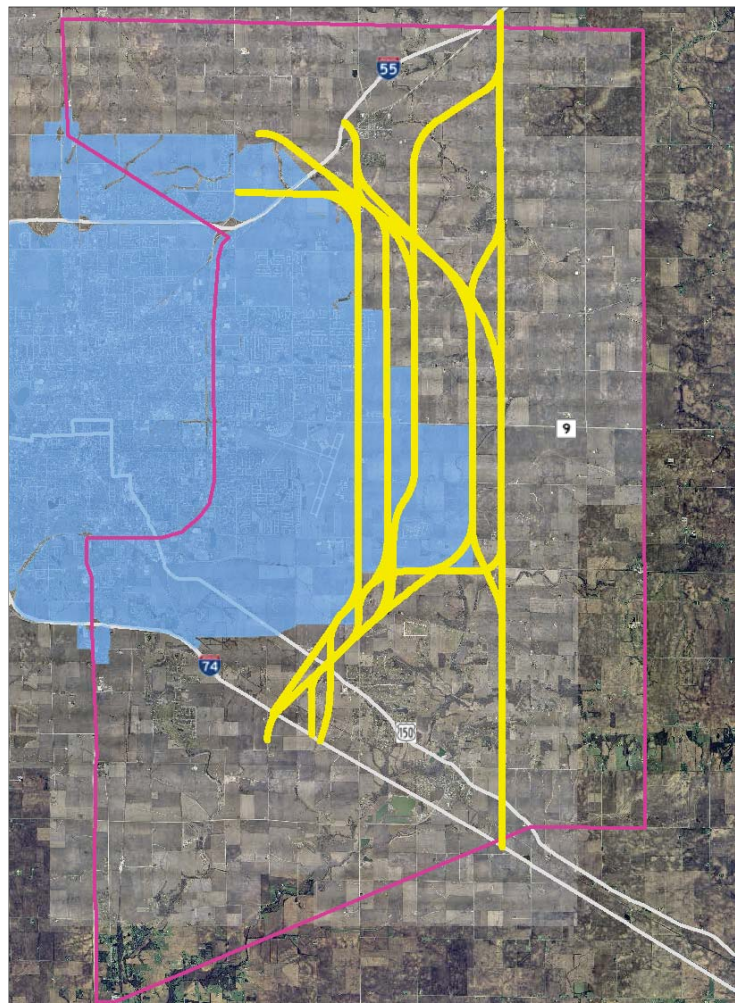
Does the alternative:

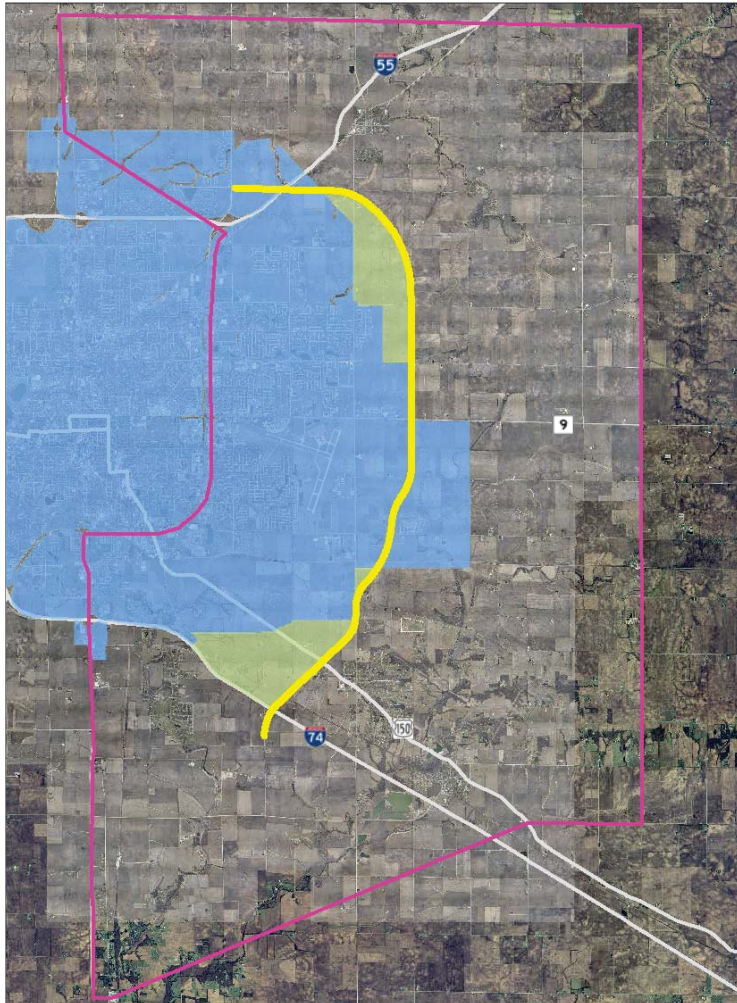
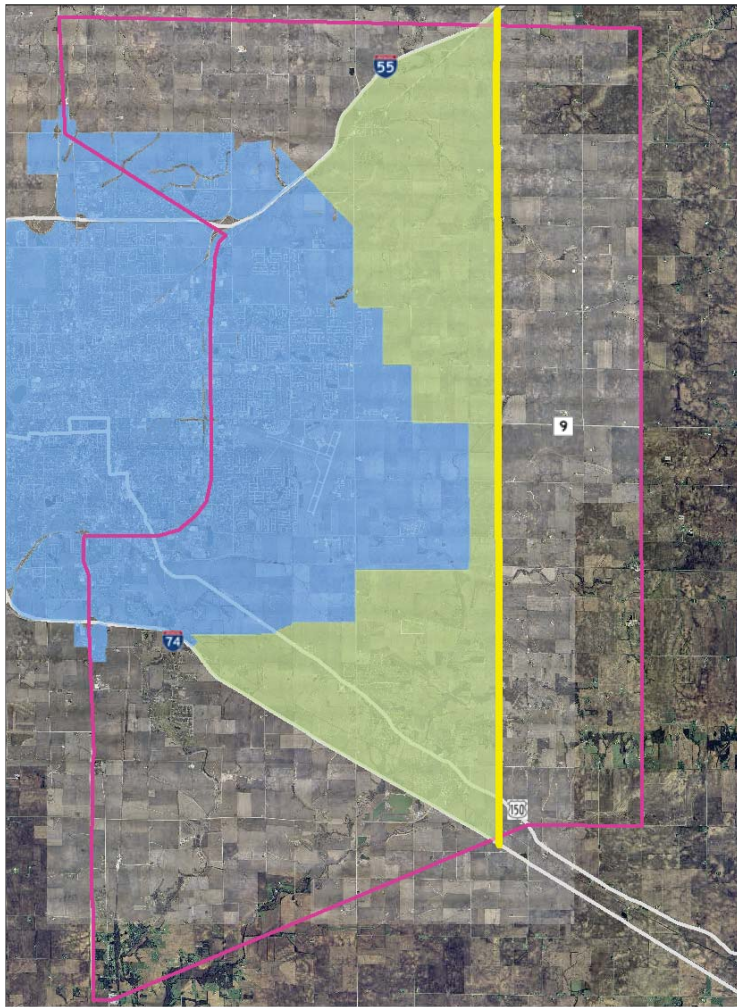
- reduce congestion in the study area?
- improve N-S travel efficiencies?
- improve E-W travel efficiencies?

Access

Does the alternative:

- improve travel efficiency to the interstate system?
- provide N-S connectivity?
- provide E-W connectivity?





PURPOSE & NEED SCREENING

METRICS

Accommodate
Managed Growth

Area between 2035 Land
Use Plan and Alternative

Volume To
Capacity Ratio
(v/c)

% Decrease of
Congested Roadways

Access

Does the alternative:

- improve travel efficiency to the interstate system?
- provide N-S connectivity?
- provide E-W connectivity?

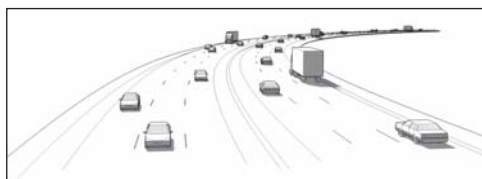


TRAFFIC CAPACITY

What do volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratios look like?

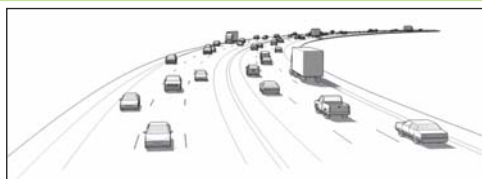
$$v/c < 0.8$$

Roadway section is under capacity



$$0.8 \leq v/c < 1.0$$

Roadway section is near capacity



$$1.0 \leq v/c \leq 1.2$$

Roadway section is slightly over capacity



$$v/c > 1.2$$

Roadway section is substantially
over capacity

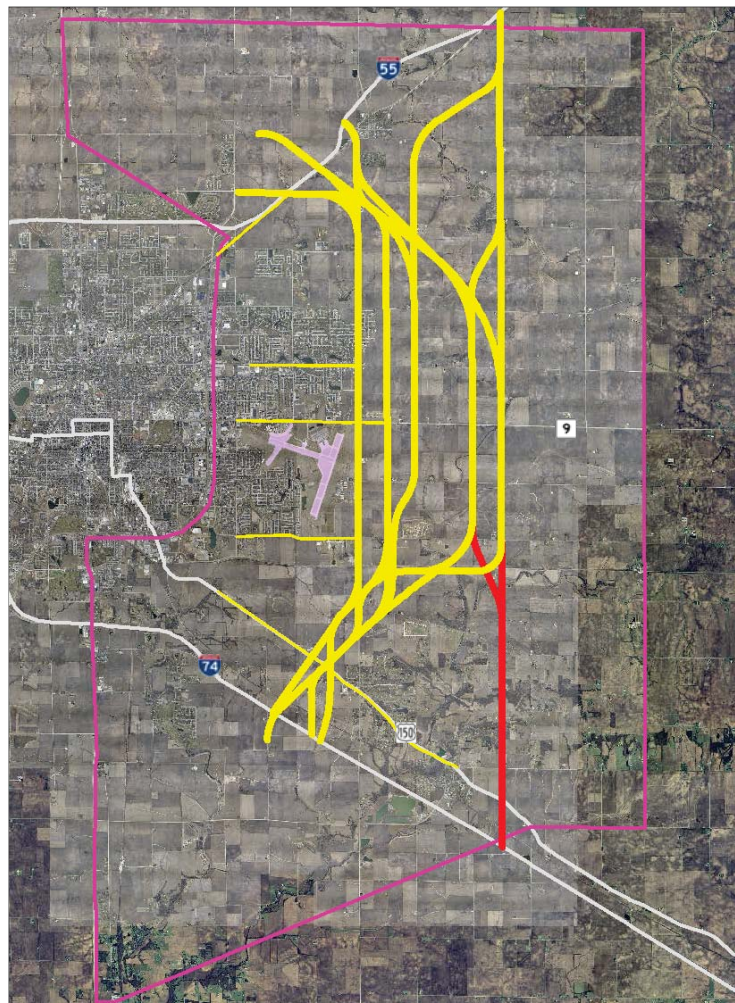


TRAVEL TIME SAVINGS

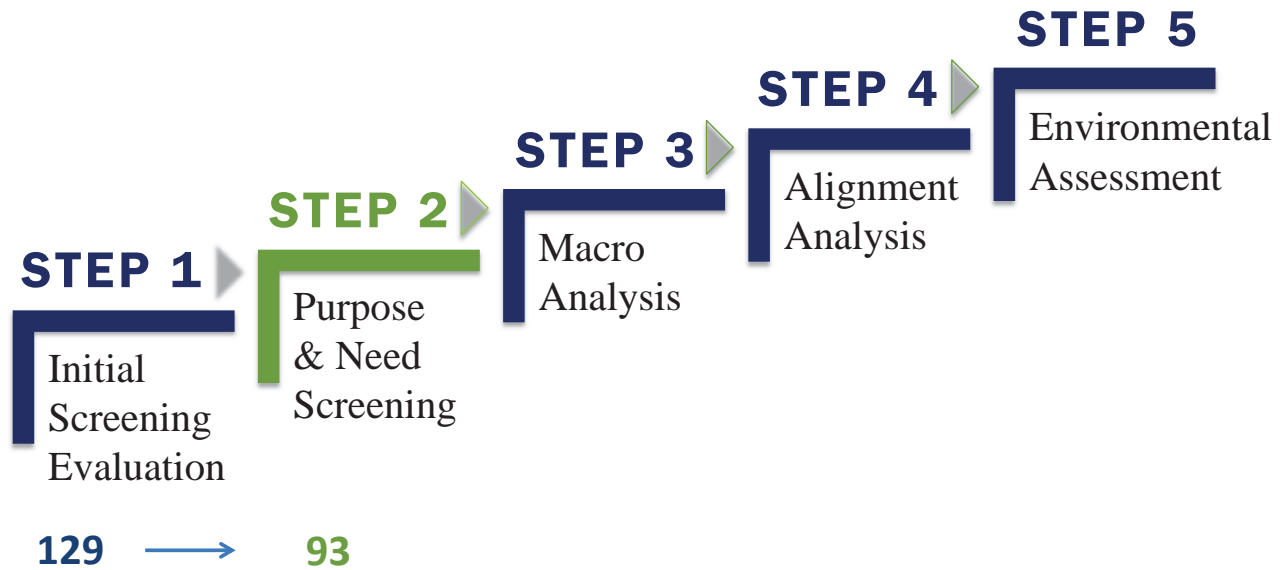
Cumulative: 200 to 600 vehicle hours saved per day

Network-Wide: 3,000 to 5,000 vehicle hours saved per day

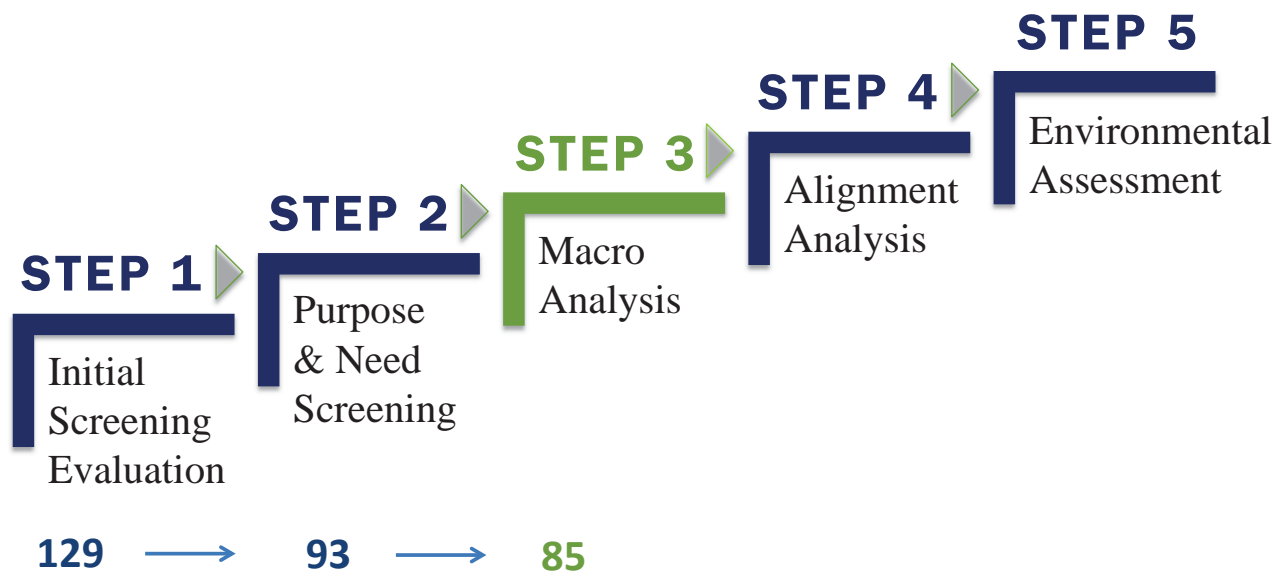
Vehicle hours vary based on alternative



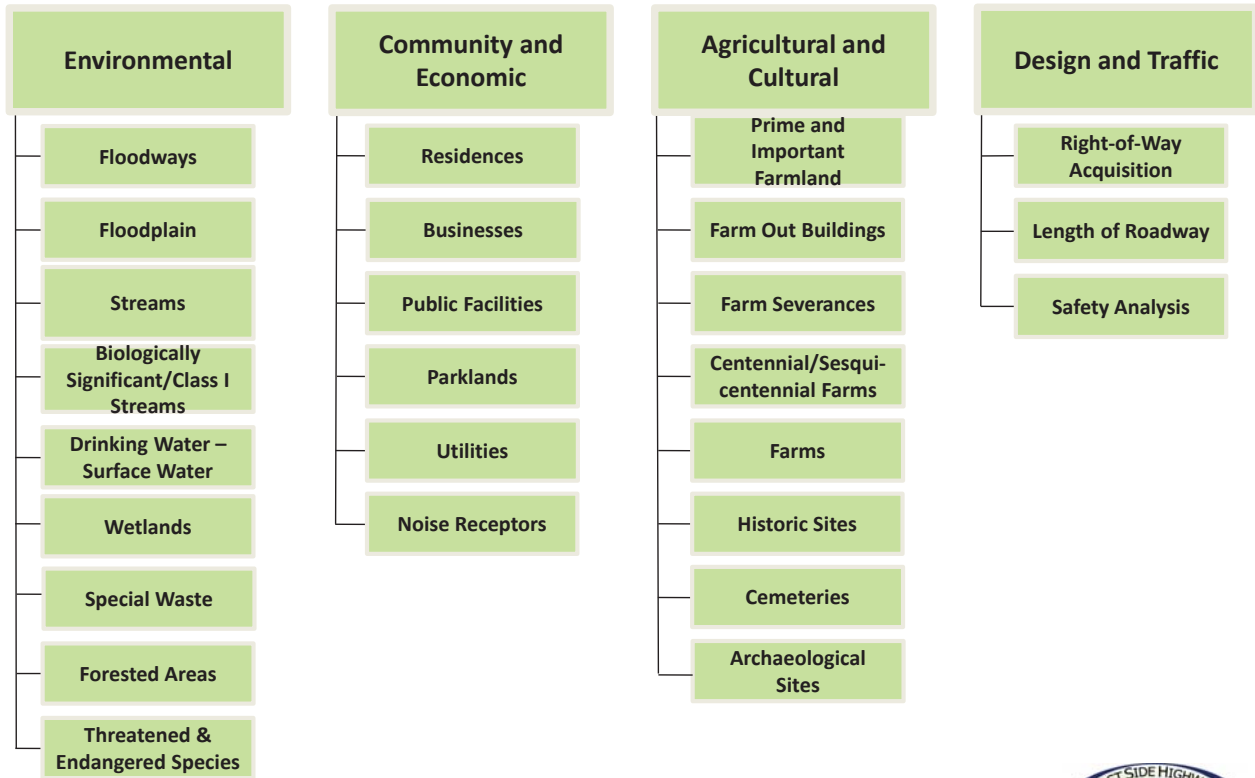
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



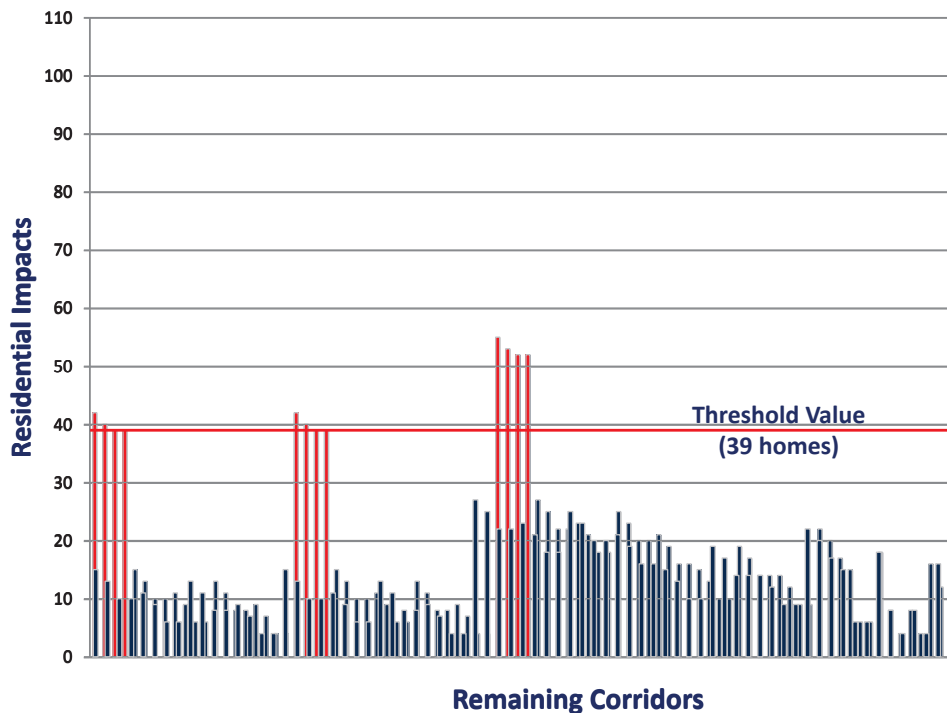
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



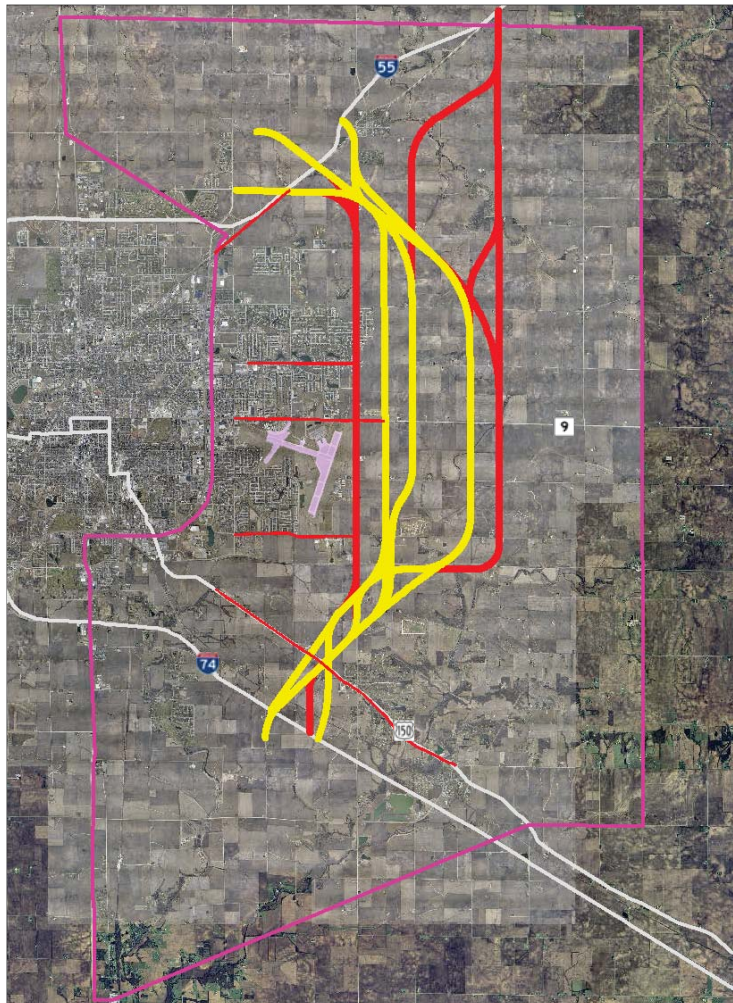
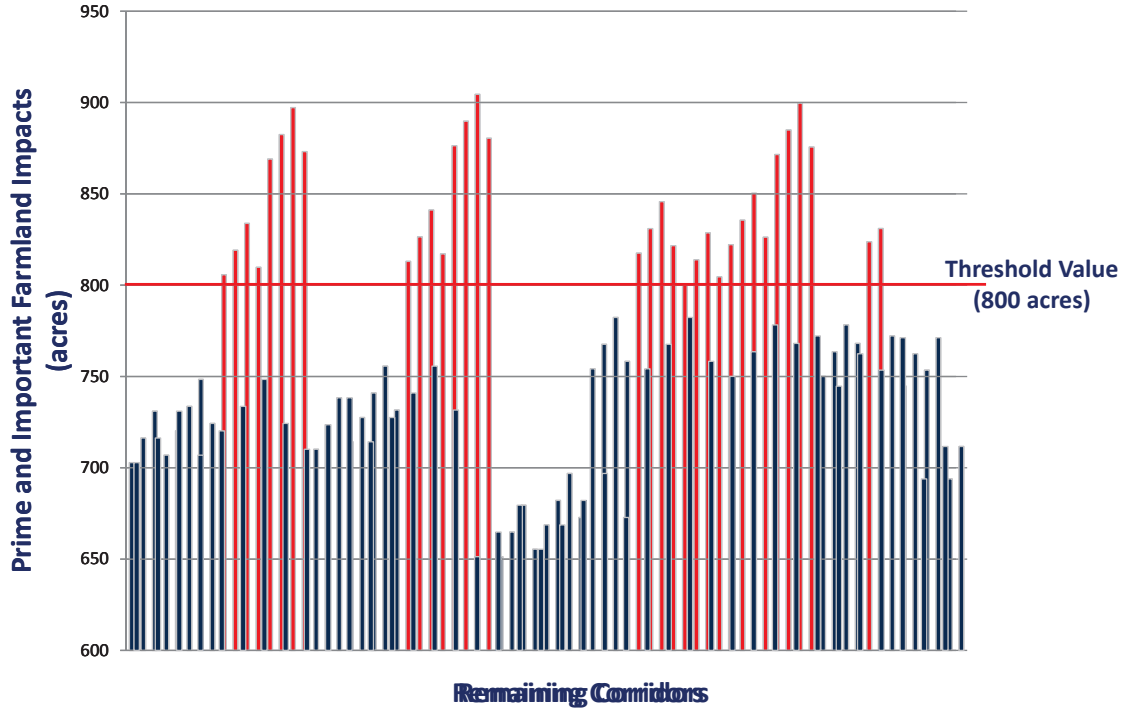
MACRO ANALYSIS CRITERIA



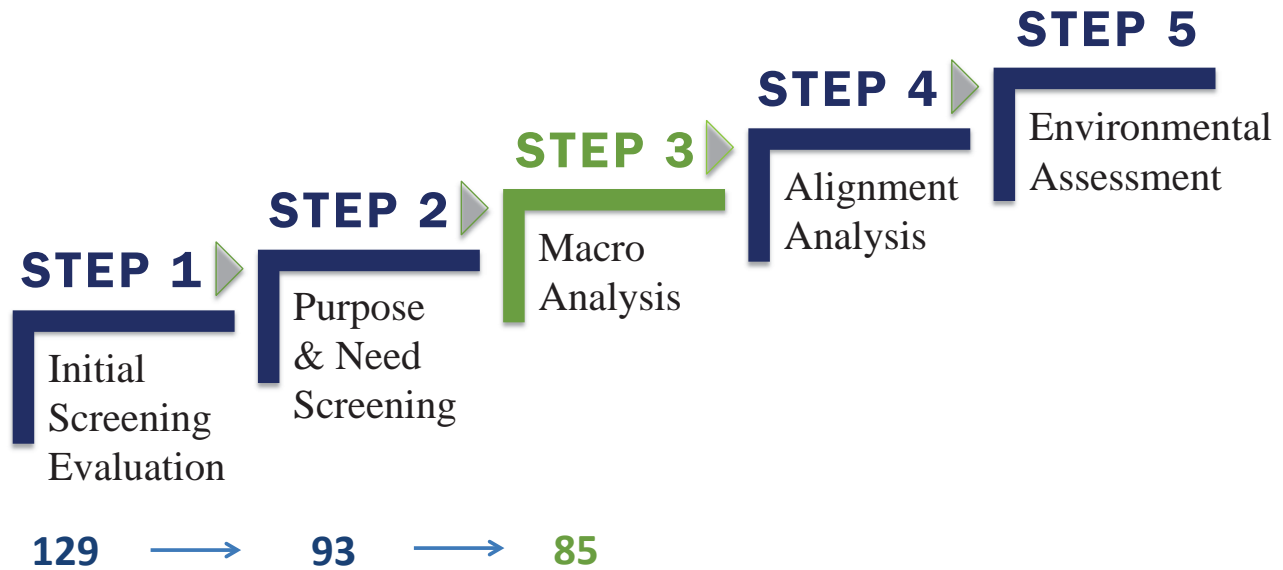
MACRO ANALYSIS RESIDENTIAL IMPACTS



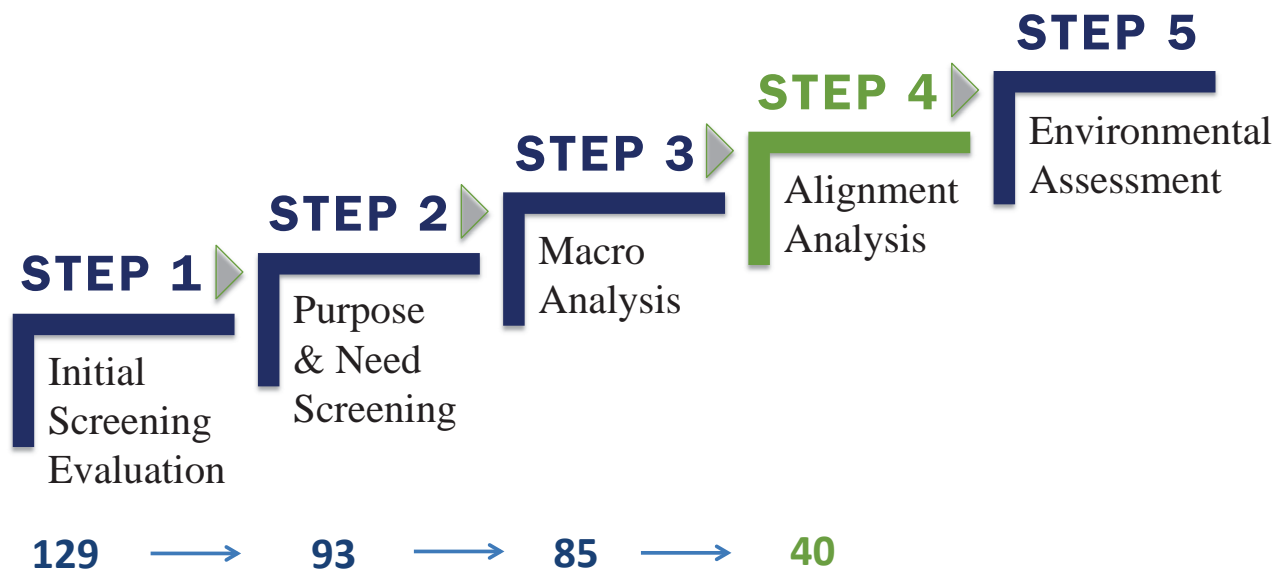
MACRO ANALYSIS PRIME FARMLAND IMPACTS

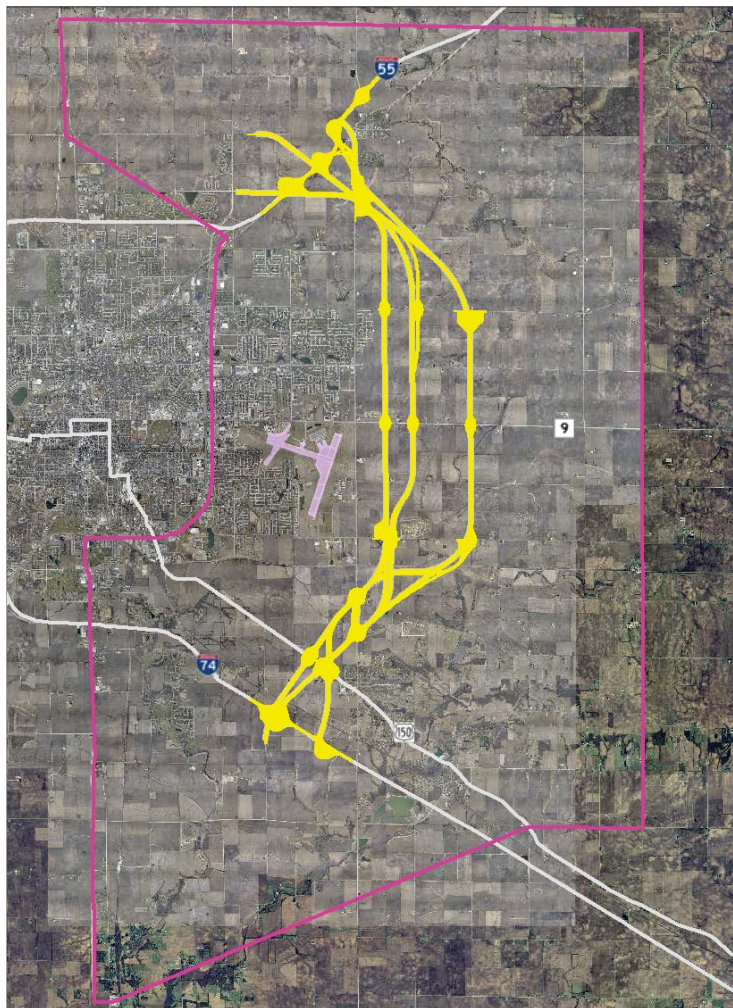


ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS





ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA



ELIMINATION CRITERIA

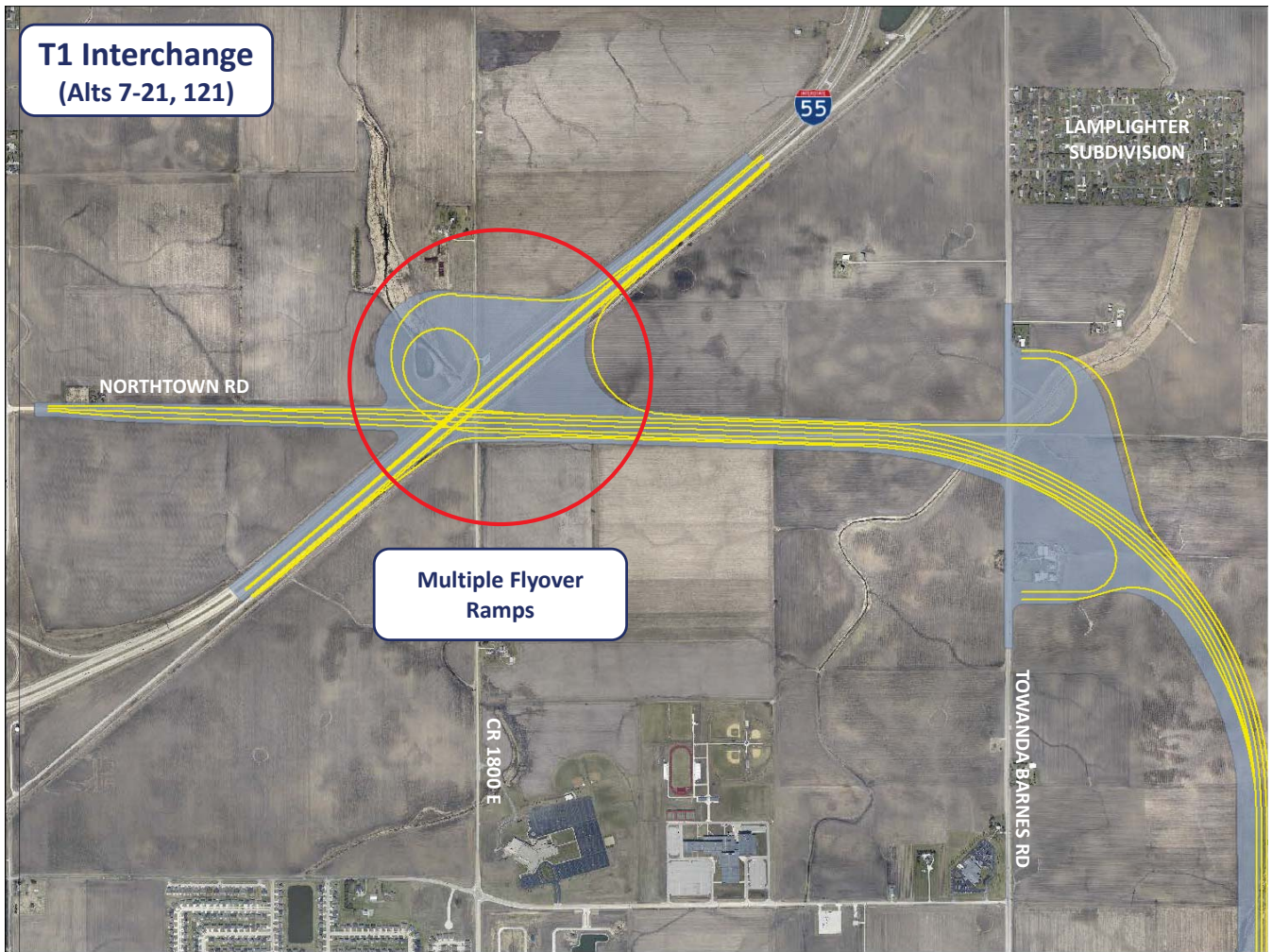
- Design and Traffic
 - Termini Connections
 - Engineering Constructability
- Environmental Resources
 - Residential
 - Agricultural
 - Sustainability



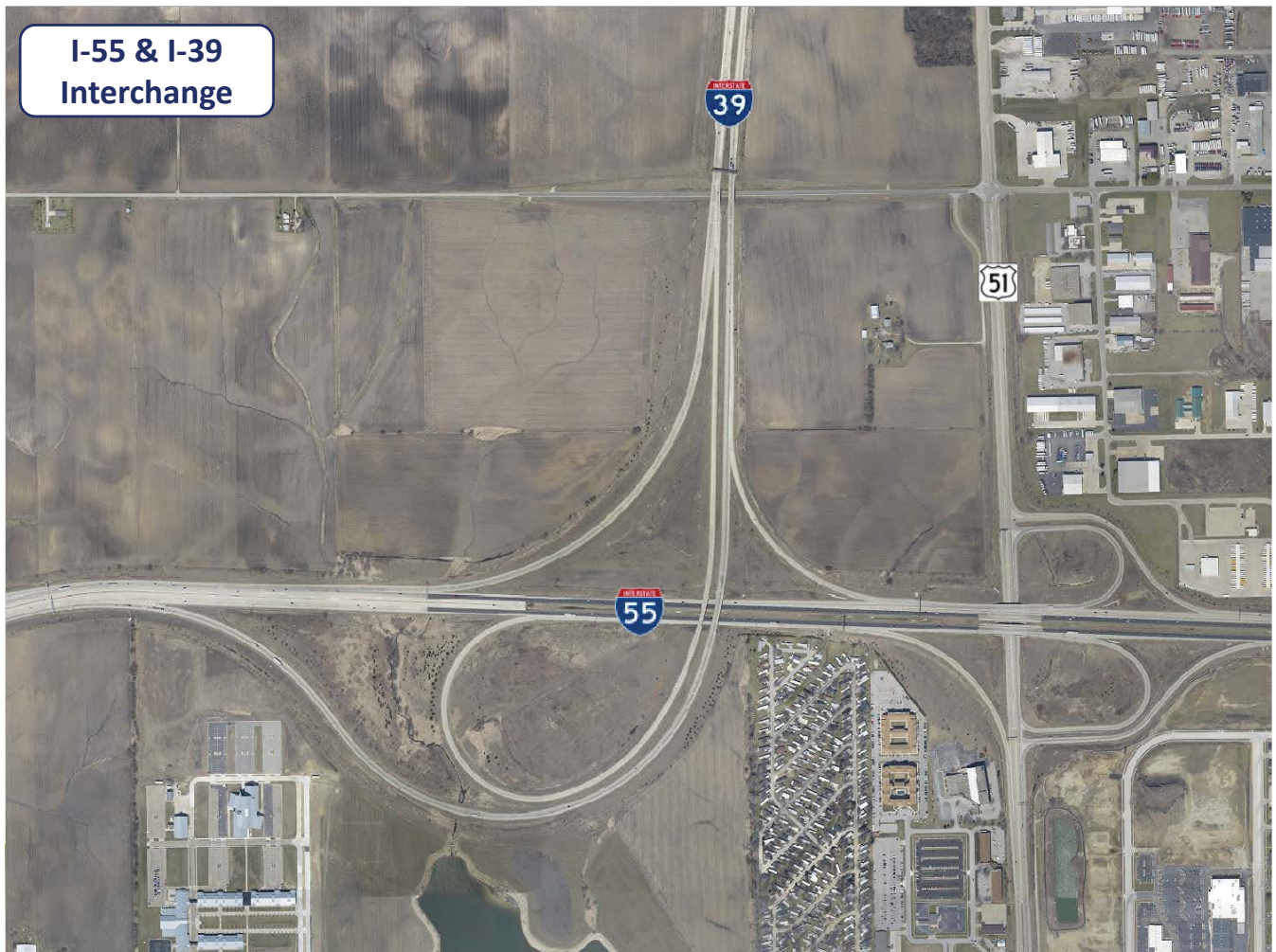
~~Collector-Distributor~~ Distributor Road



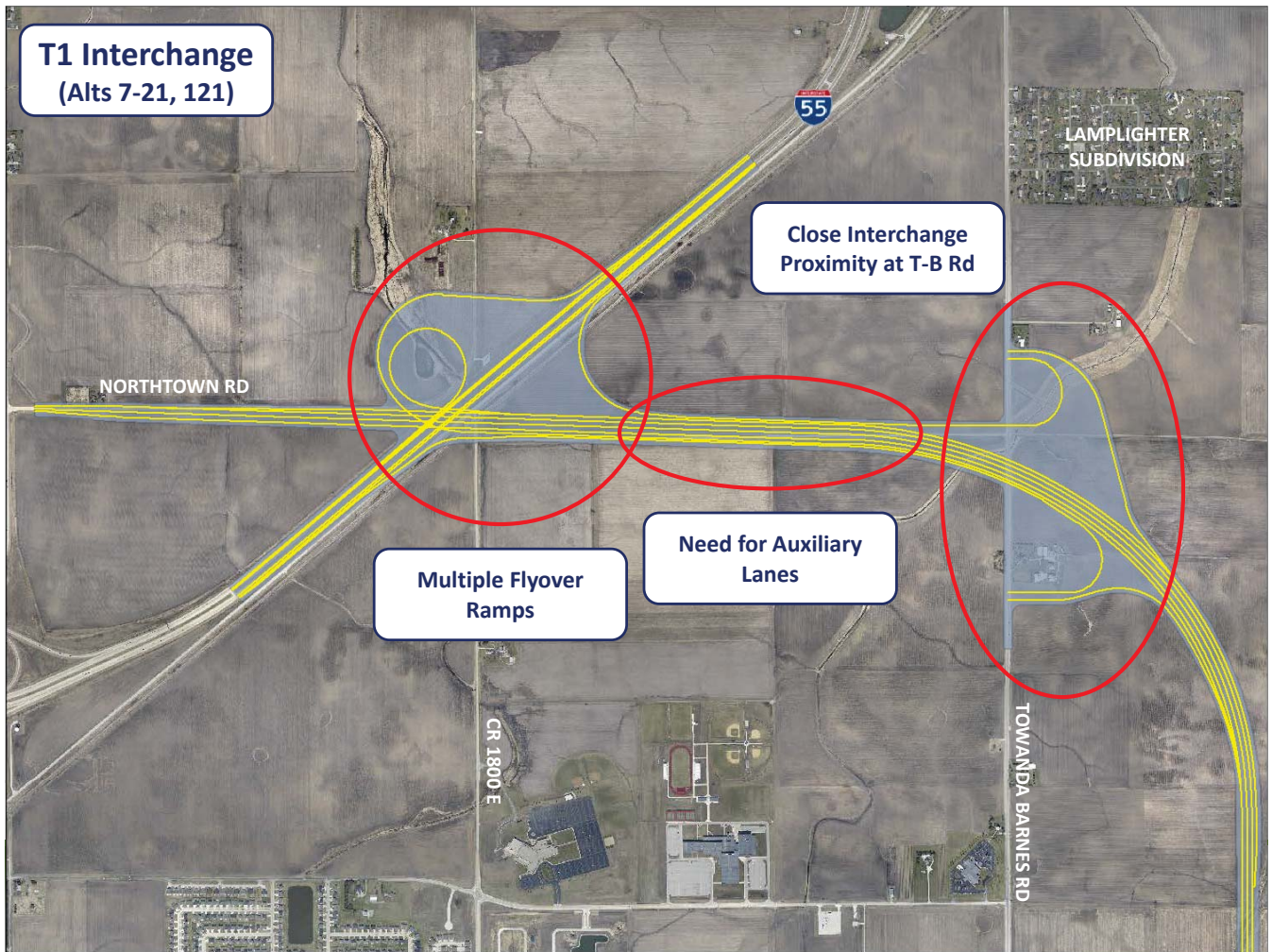
**T1 Interchange
(Alts 7-21, 121)**



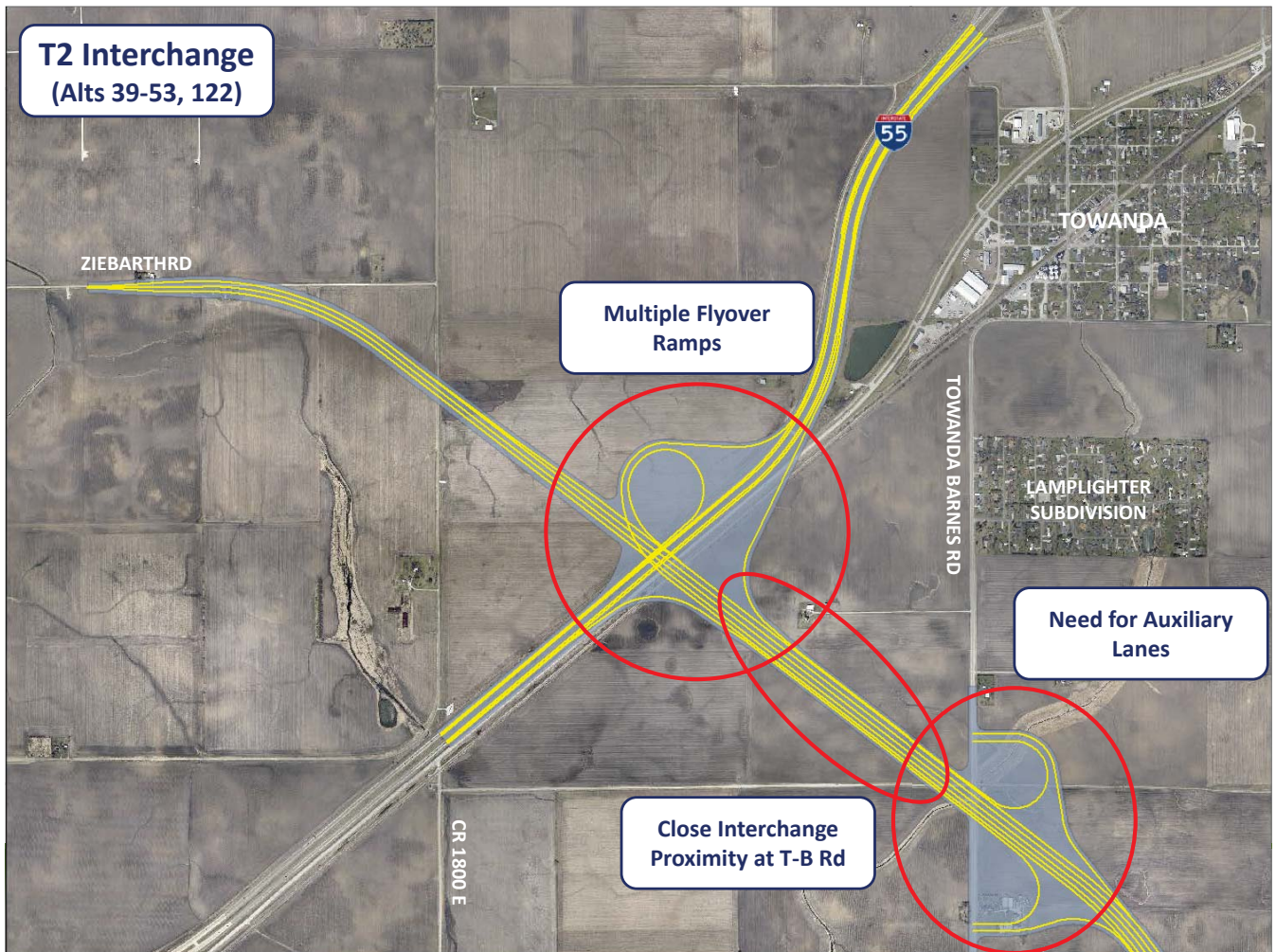
**I-55 & I-39
Interchange**



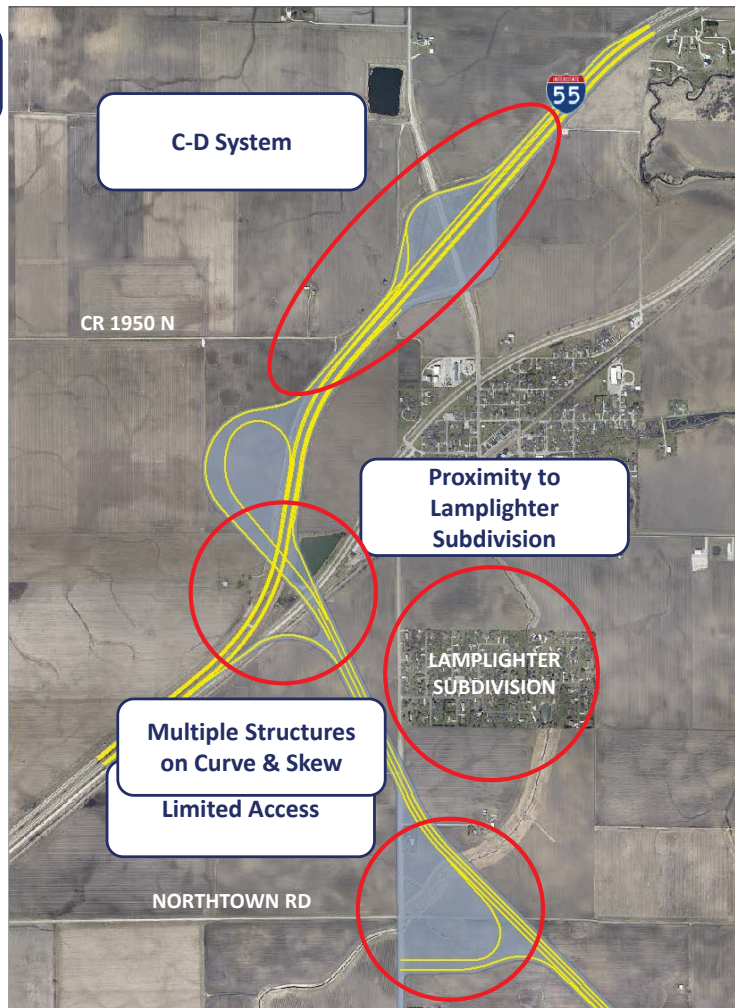
T1 Interchange
(Alts 7-21, 121)



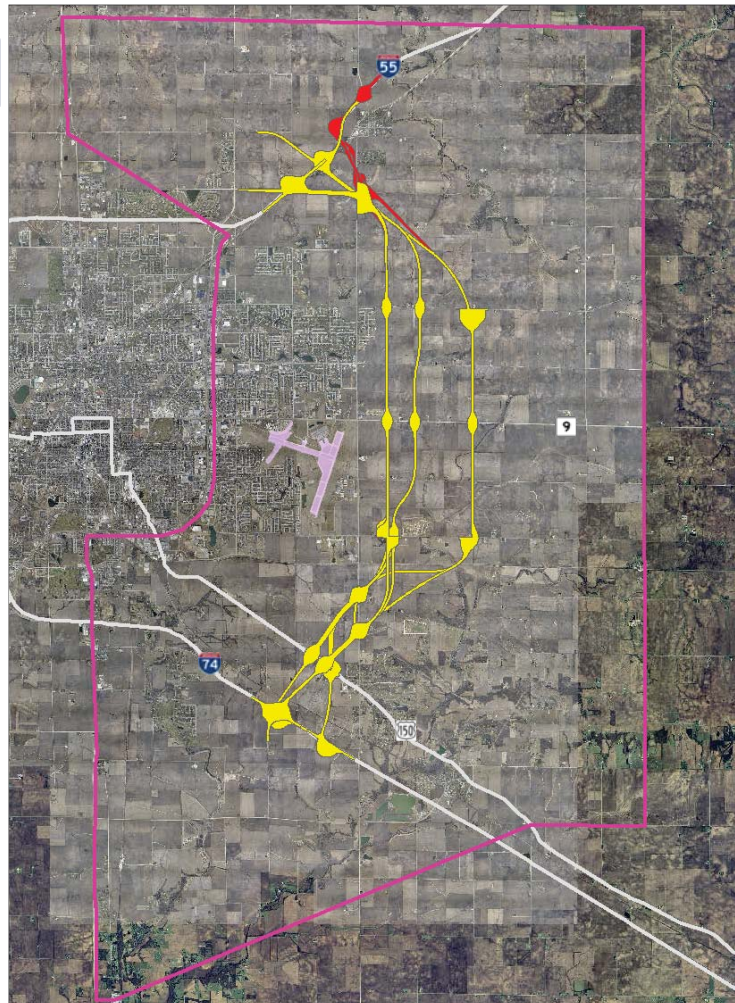
T2 Interchange
(Alts 39-53, 122)



**T19 Interchange
(Alts 117-120)**



Alignments
40 → 24

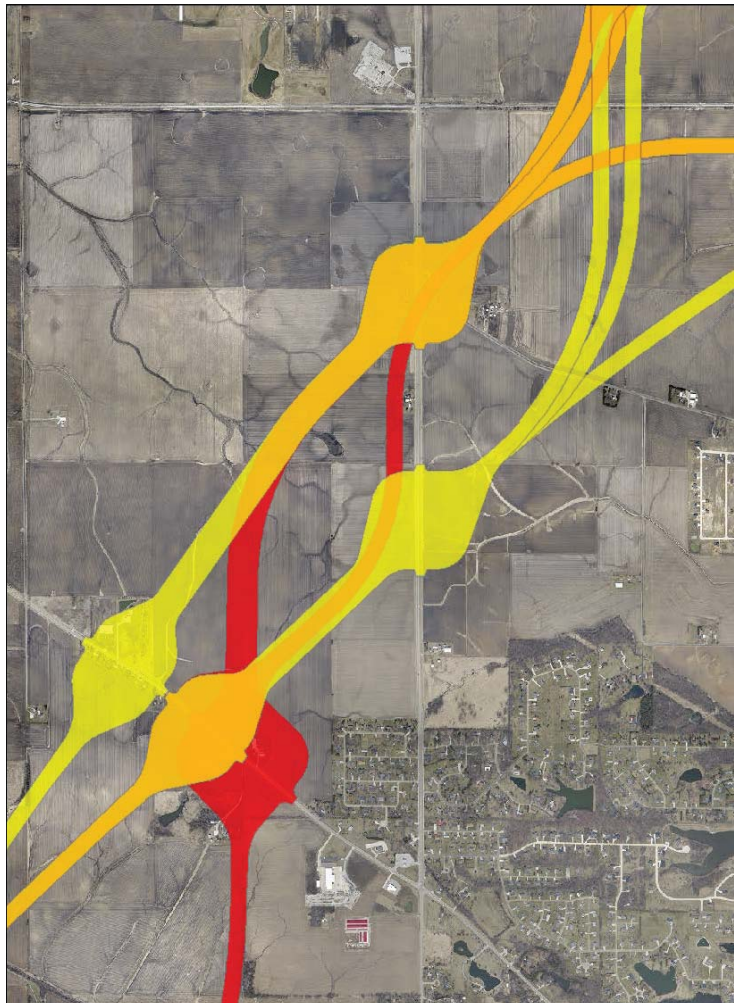


ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTABILITY

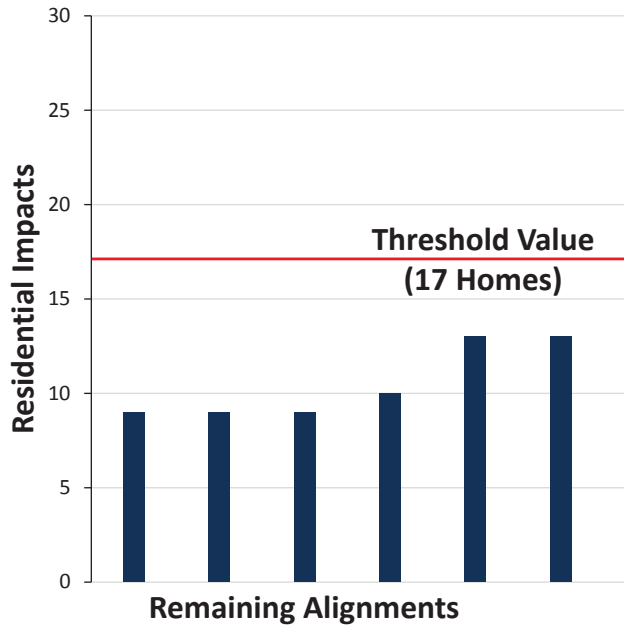
- Skewed crossing at Towanda Barnes Road and US 150



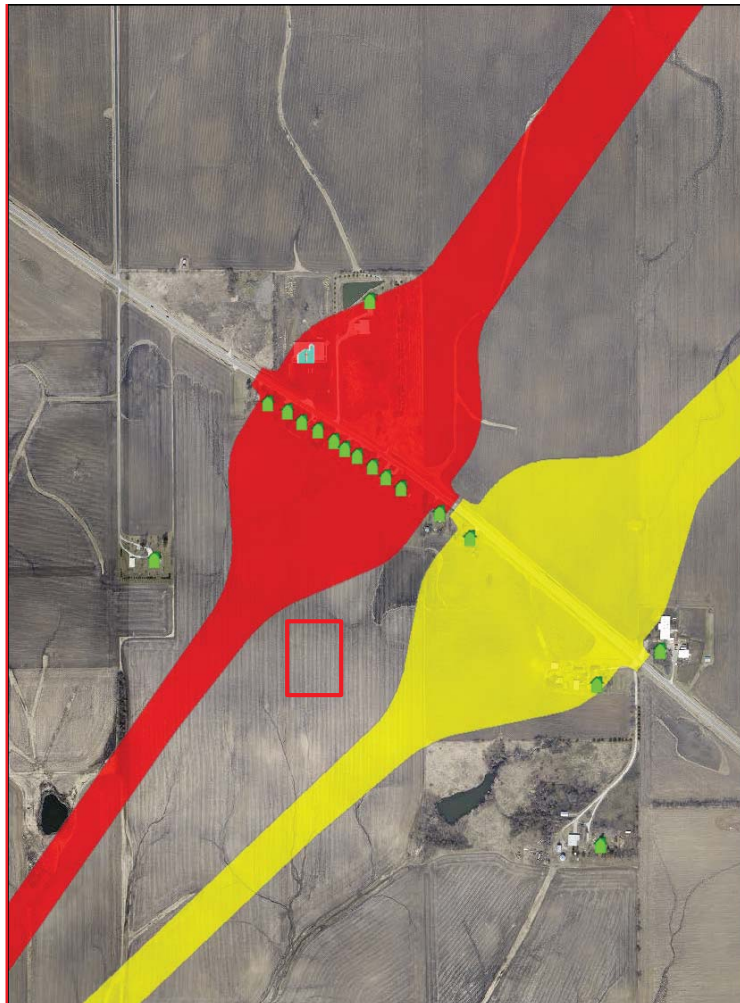
Alignments
24 → 12



ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS RESIDENTIAL IMPACTS



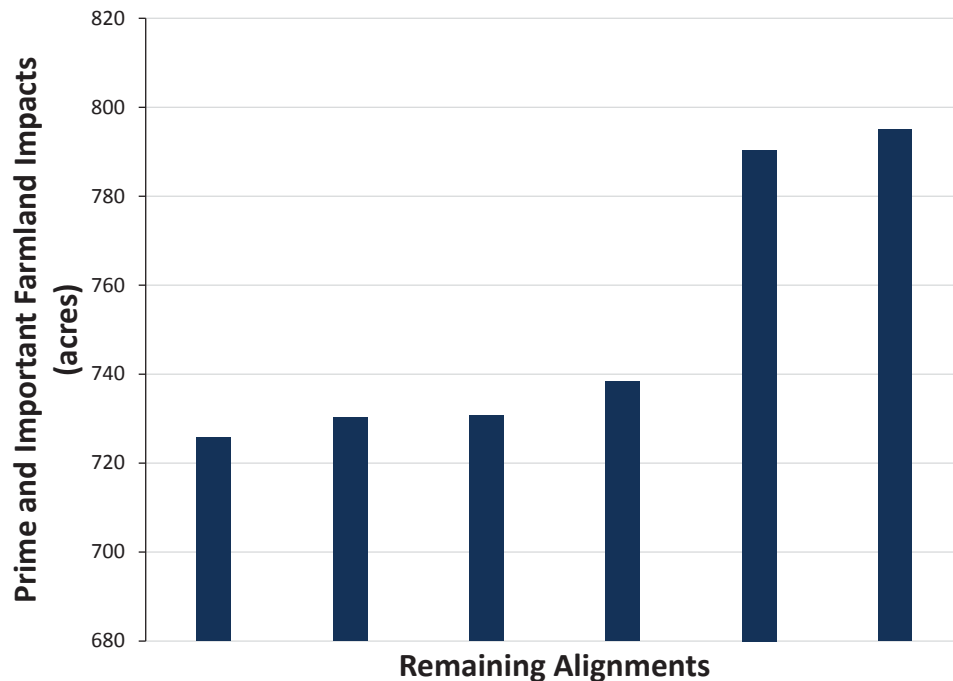
Alignments
12 → 6



ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA



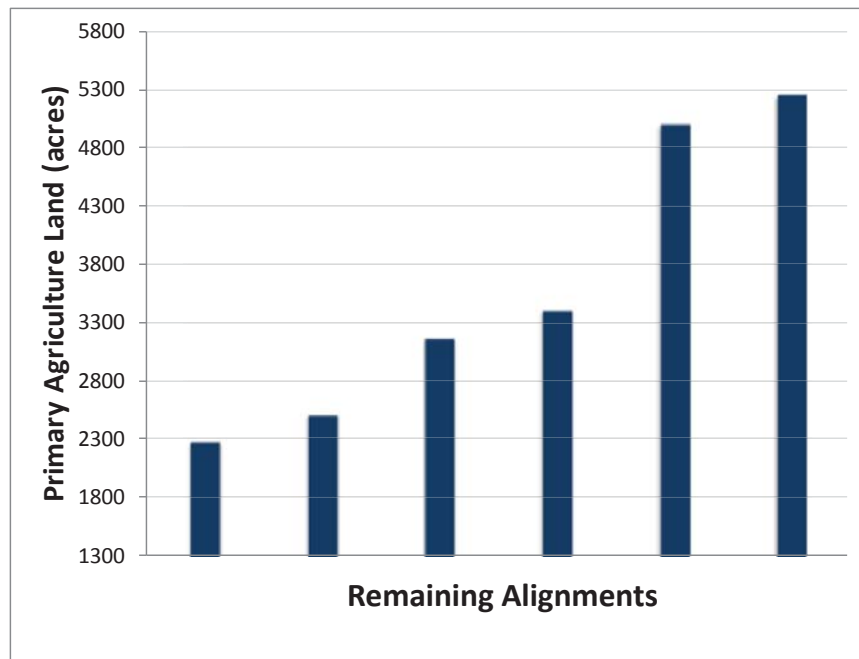
ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS AGRICULTURAL IMPACTS



ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA

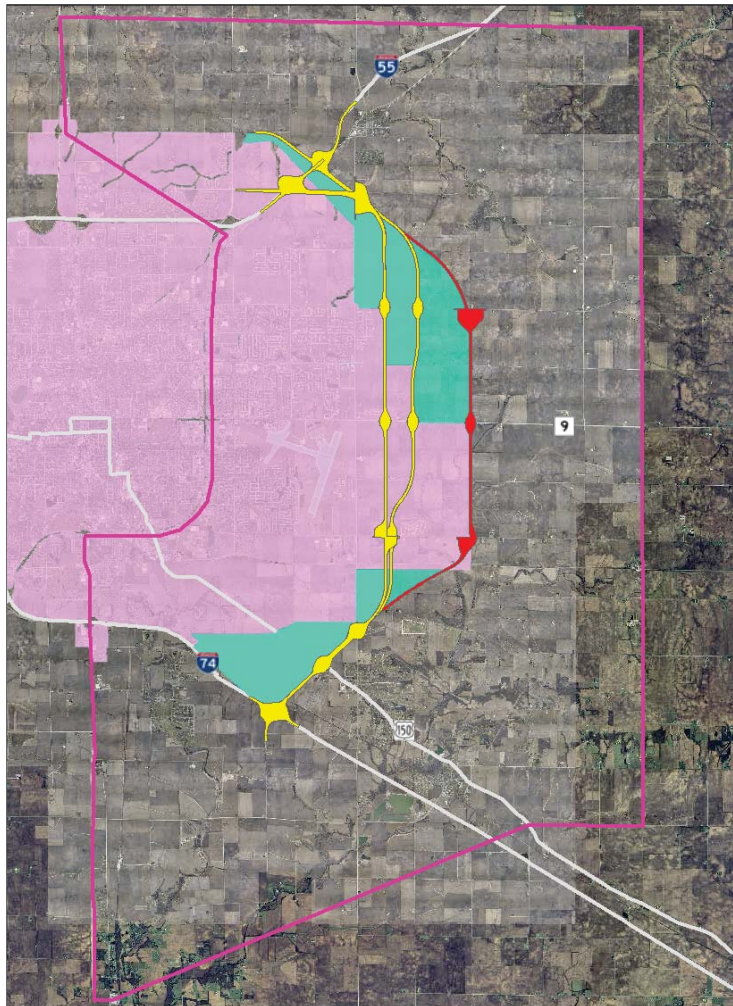


ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS

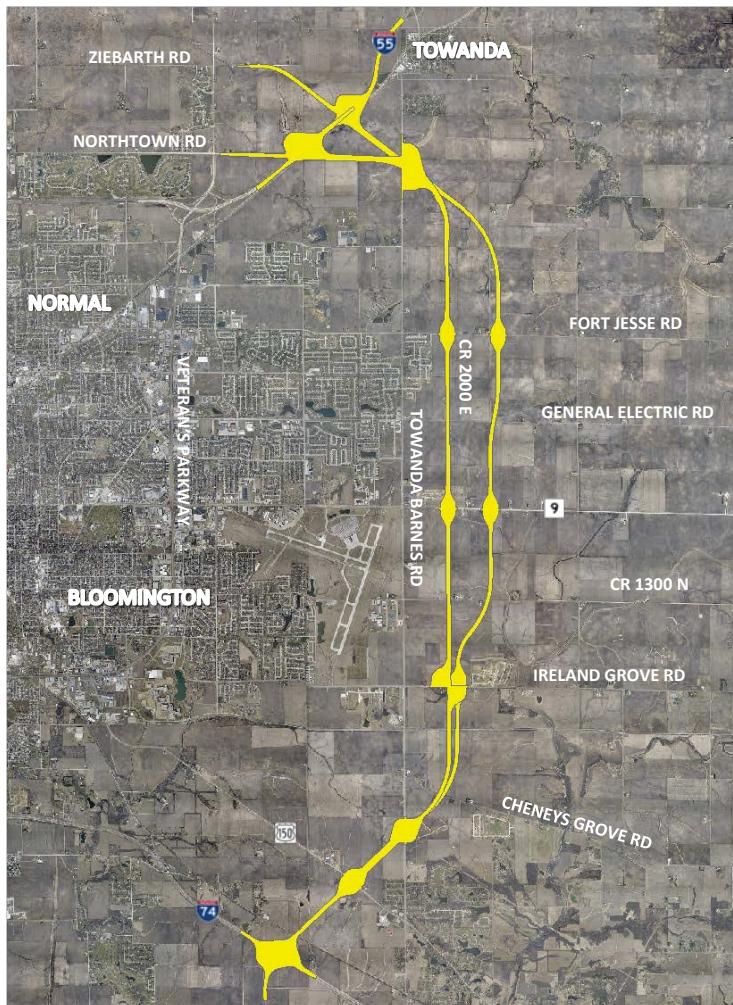


Alignments

6 → 4



Remaining Alignments



TYPES OF HIGHWAY FACILITIES

Expressway



EVALUATION

Two Principal Needs:

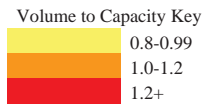
- Accommodate Managed Growth
- Provide Improved Mobility and Access
 - North-South and East-West Mobility (Local Access)
 - Interstate System (I-55 & I-74)(Regional Access)
 - Central Illinois Regional Airport (Regional Access)



NEED: EAST – WEST MOBILITY

- Fort Jesse Road
- General Electric Road
- Empire Street
- Ireland Grove Road
- US 150

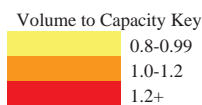
Volume to Capacity Ratio		Projected V/C (2035 No-Build)
Roadway	Volume Location	V/C
Fort Jesse Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	0.7
General Electric Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	0.9
Empire Street (IL 9)	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.1
Ireland Grove Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.0
US Rte. 150	East of 2000 East Road	1.4
US Rte. 150	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.1
Access to Towanda Interchange	I-55	1.7
Access to Downs Interchange	I-74	1.1
I-55	West of new interchange	varies
I-74	West of new interchange	varies



NEED: EAST – WEST MOBILITY

- Fort Jesse Road
- General Electric Road
- Empire Street
- Ireland Grove Road
- US 150

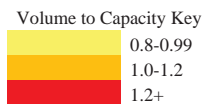
Volume to Capacity Ratio		Projected V/C (2035 No-Build)	Arterial Option
Roadway	Volume Location	V/C	V/C
Fort Jesse Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	0.7	0.7
General Electric Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	0.9	0.9
Empire Street (IL 9)	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.1	1.1
Ireland Grove Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.0	1.0
US Rte. 150	East of 2000 East Road	1.4	0.9
US Rte. 150	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.1	0.9
Access to Towanda Interchange	I-55	1.7	0.1
Access to Downs Interchange	I-74	1.1	0.4
I-55	West of new interchange	varies	0.9 nb; 1.1 build
I-74	West of new interchange	varies	0.7 nb; 0.6 build



NEED: EAST – WEST MOBILITY

- Fort Jesse Road
- General Electric Road
- Empire Street
- Ireland Grove Road
- US 150

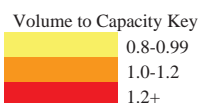
Volume to Capacity Ratio		Projected V/C (2035 No-Build)	Arterial Option	Expressway and Freeway Option
Roadway	Volume Location	V/C	V/C	V/C
Fort Jesse Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	0.7	0.7	0.7
General Electric Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	0.9	0.9	0.9
Empire Street (IL 9)	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.1	1.1	1.2
Ireland Grove Road	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.0	1.0	1.0
US Rte. 150	East of 2000 East Road	1.4	0.9	0.9
US Rte. 150	West of Towanda Barnes Road	1.1	0.9	0.9
Access to Towanda Interchange	I-55	1.7	0.1	1.1
Access to Downs Interchange	I-74	1.1	0.4	0.4
I-55	West of new interchange	varies	0.9 nb; 1.1 build	0.9 nb; 1 build
I-74	West of new interchange	varies	0.7 nb; 0.6 build	0.9 nb; 0.7 build



NEED: NORTH – SOUTH MOBILITY

Towanda Barnes Road is the Major Existing North-South Roadway

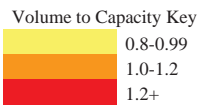
Volume to Capacity Ratio		Projected V/C (2035 No-Build)
Roadway	Volume Location	V/C
Towanda Barnes Road	South of Empire Street (IL 9)	1.2
Towanda Barnes Road	North of ESH	0.2
Towanda Barnes Road	North of Raab Road	0.5
Towanda Barnes Road	Empire to Ft. Jesse	1.1
Towanda Barnes Road	North of Ireland Grove Road	1.0
Towanda Barnes Road	South of US150	1.4
ESH new facility		
ESH	North of Towanda Barnes (north)	
ESH	North of Fort Jesse Road	
ESH	South of Empire Street (IL 9)	
ESH	North of Ireland Grove Road	
ESH	NE of Towanda Barnes (south)	
ESH	South of US150	
Max V/C on Build Option:		



NEED: NORTH – SOUTH MOBILITY

Towanda Barnes Road is the Major Existing North-South Roadway

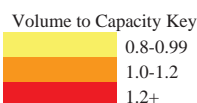
Volume to Capacity Ratio		Projected V/C (2035 No-Build)	Arterial Option
Roadway	Volume Location	V/C	V/C
Towanda Barnes Road	South of Empire Street (IL 9)	1.2	1.0
Towanda Barnes Road	North of ESH	0.2	0.1
Towanda Barnes Road	North of Raab Road	0.5	0.4
Towanda Barnes Road	Empire to Ft. Jesse	1.1	0.8
Towanda Barnes Road	North of Ireland Grove Road	1.0	0.8
Towanda Barnes Road	South of US150	1.4	1.0
ESH new facility			
ESH	North of Towanda Barnes (north)		0.6
ESH	North of Fort Jesse Road		0.6
ESH	South of Empire Street (IL 9)		0.8
ESH	North of Ireland Grove Road		0.6
ESH	NE of Towanda Barnes (south)		0.5
ESH	South of US150		1.1
Max V/C on Build Option:			1.1



NEED: NORTH – SOUTH MOBILITY

Towanda Barnes Road is the Major Existing North-South Roadway

Volume to Capacity Ratio		Projected V/C (2035 No-Build)	Arterial Option	Expressway and Freeway Option
Roadway	Volume Location	V/C	V/C	V/C
Towanda Barnes Road	South of Empire Street (IL 9)	1.2	1.0	0.9
Towanda Barnes Road	North of ESH	0.2	0.1	0.1
Towanda Barnes Road	North of Raab Road	0.5	0.4	0.2
Towanda Barnes Road	Empire to Ft. Jesse	1.1	0.8	0.8
Towanda Barnes Road	North of Ireland Grove Road	1.0	0.8	0.6
Towanda Barnes Road	South of US150	1.4	1.0	1.0
ESH new facility				
ESH	North of Towanda Barnes (north)		0.6	0.4
ESH	North of Fort Jesse Road		0.6	0.5
ESH	South of Empire Street (IL 9)		0.8	0.7
ESH	North of Ireland Grove Road		0.6	0.5
ESH	NE of Towanda Barnes (south)		0.5	0.5
ESH	South of US150		1.1	0.7
Max V/C on Build Option:			1.1	0.7



NEED: NORTH – SOUTH MOBILITY

Towanda Barnes Road is the Major Existing North-South Roadway

	Expressway and Freeway	Arterial
Less Traffic Volume on TB-Road	✓	✗
Less Congestion on TB-Road	✓	✓
Better Traffic Flow on ESH	✓	✗



NEED: IMPROVE REGIONAL ACCESS

	Arterial Option	Expressway and Freeway Option
2035 Travel Time on ESH Between I-55 and I-74	18 minutes	12 minutes
v/c		

Based on the Analysis
Expressway or Freeway is Recommended Over the Arterial Option

The Expressway and Freeway options include interchanges with Grove Road, providing efficient access to Central Illinois Regional Airport for both local and regional travelers.



STOP AND ACCESS CONTROL

Expressway:

- If signals are needed within 9 years of construction, then an interchange should be built at the start of the project
- If signals are needed within 10-20 years of construction, then an interchange should be *planned* for at the start of the project

(per IDOT Design Manual)



STOP AND ACCESS CONTROL

Freeway:

Full Access Control with Interchanges and Grade Separations



FACILITY TYPE

Facility Type Option			
Crossroad	Arterial	Expressway	Freeway
Towanda Barnes Rd. (N)	Signal	Interchange	Interchange
Fort Jesse Rd.	Signal	Interchange	Interchange
General Electric Rd.	Signal	Interchange/Grade Separation	Interchange/Grade Separation
Empire St.	Signal	Interchange	Interchange
1300 N./Bentown Rd.	2-way stop	Grade Separation	Grade separation
Ireland Grove Rd.	Signal	Interchange	Interchange
Cheney's Grove Rd.	2-way stop	Grade Separation	Grade separation
Towanda Barnes Rd. (S)	Signal	Interchange	Interchange
US 150	Signal	Interchange	Interchange



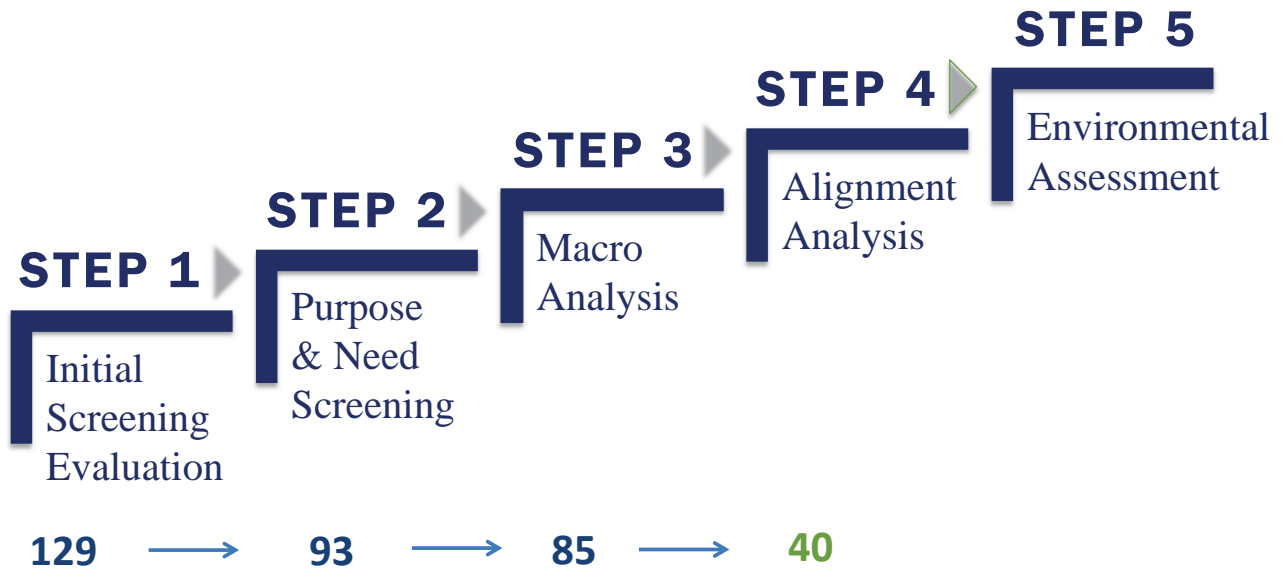
FREEWAY VS. EXPRESSWAY

Results of Analysis:

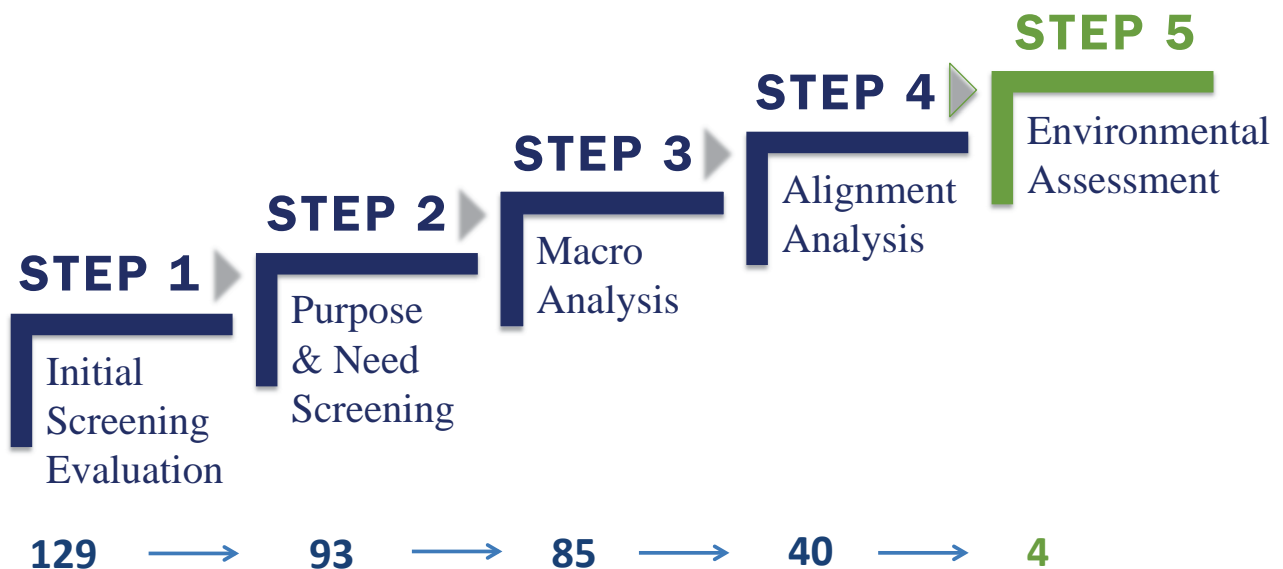
- Freeway and Expressway have identical access at crossroads for this analysis
- Expressway could still have one or two driveway entrances between crossroads, but may create complicated access issues in the future.
- Freeway is safer because it only allows access at interchanges. Expressway may have driveways that would create conflict points and increase risk of crashes.



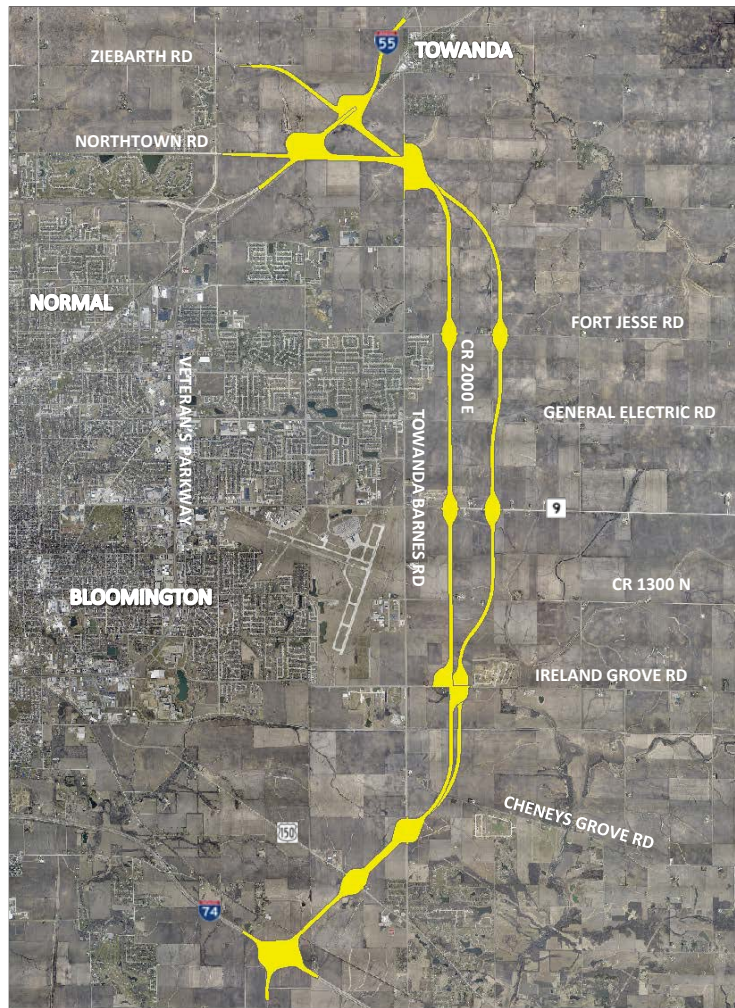
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



Remaining Alignments



TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



FOCUS WORKING GROUPS (FWG)

- Form of advisory group with specific interests and knowledge
- Review specific planning and design materials and advise Project Study Group at key milestones
- FWG member selection will occur in a fair and transparent manner



FOCUS WORKING GROUPS

We encourage you to sign up for one of the three Focus Working Groups:

- Land Use and Access Management
- Sustainability
- Alternative Modes of Transportation



CONTACT US

Website: www.eastsidehighway.com

E-mail address: ESHEA@clarkdietz.com

Phone: **(217) 373-8901**



WELCOME!



DATE

Wednesday, January 11, 2012

AGENDA

An identical, brief presentation will be given at the following times:

6:10 p.m.

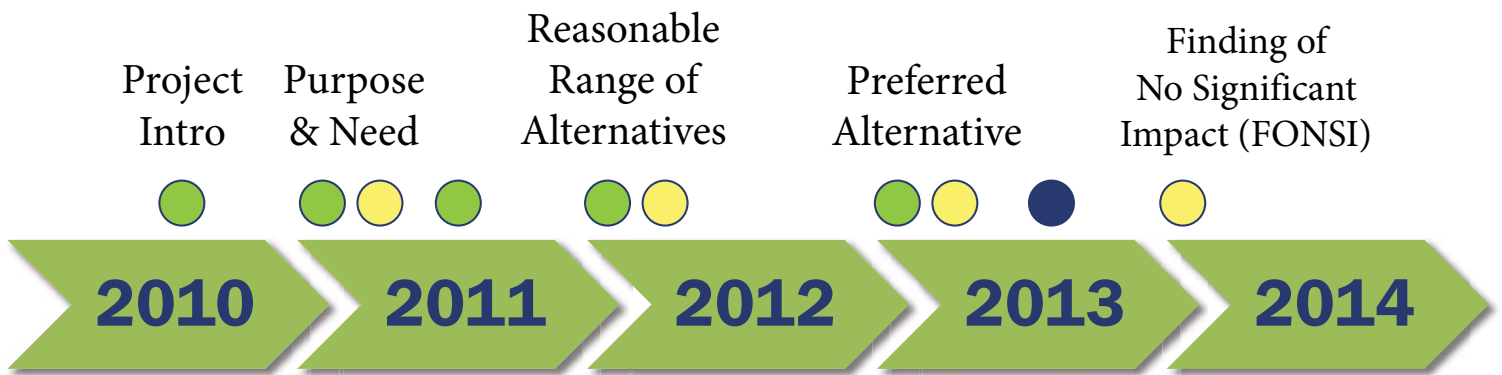
7:10 p.m.

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting is to present the alternative evaluation process to date, and identify the remaining alignments.



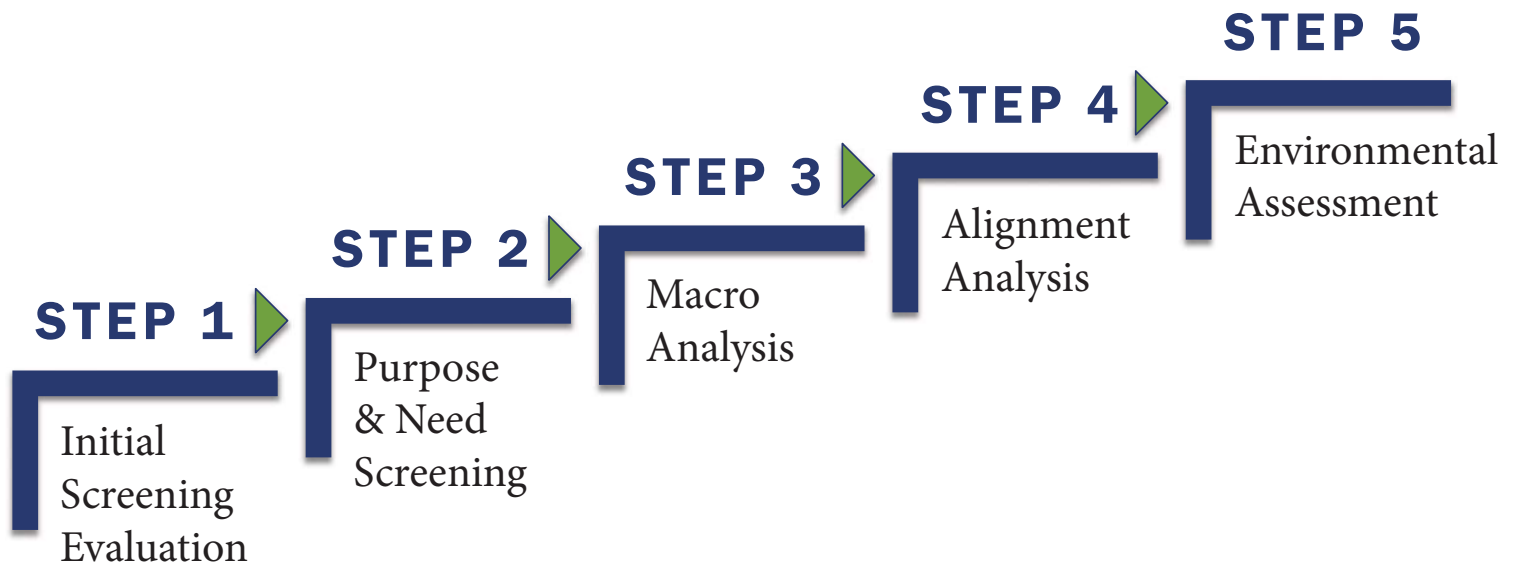
TIMELINE



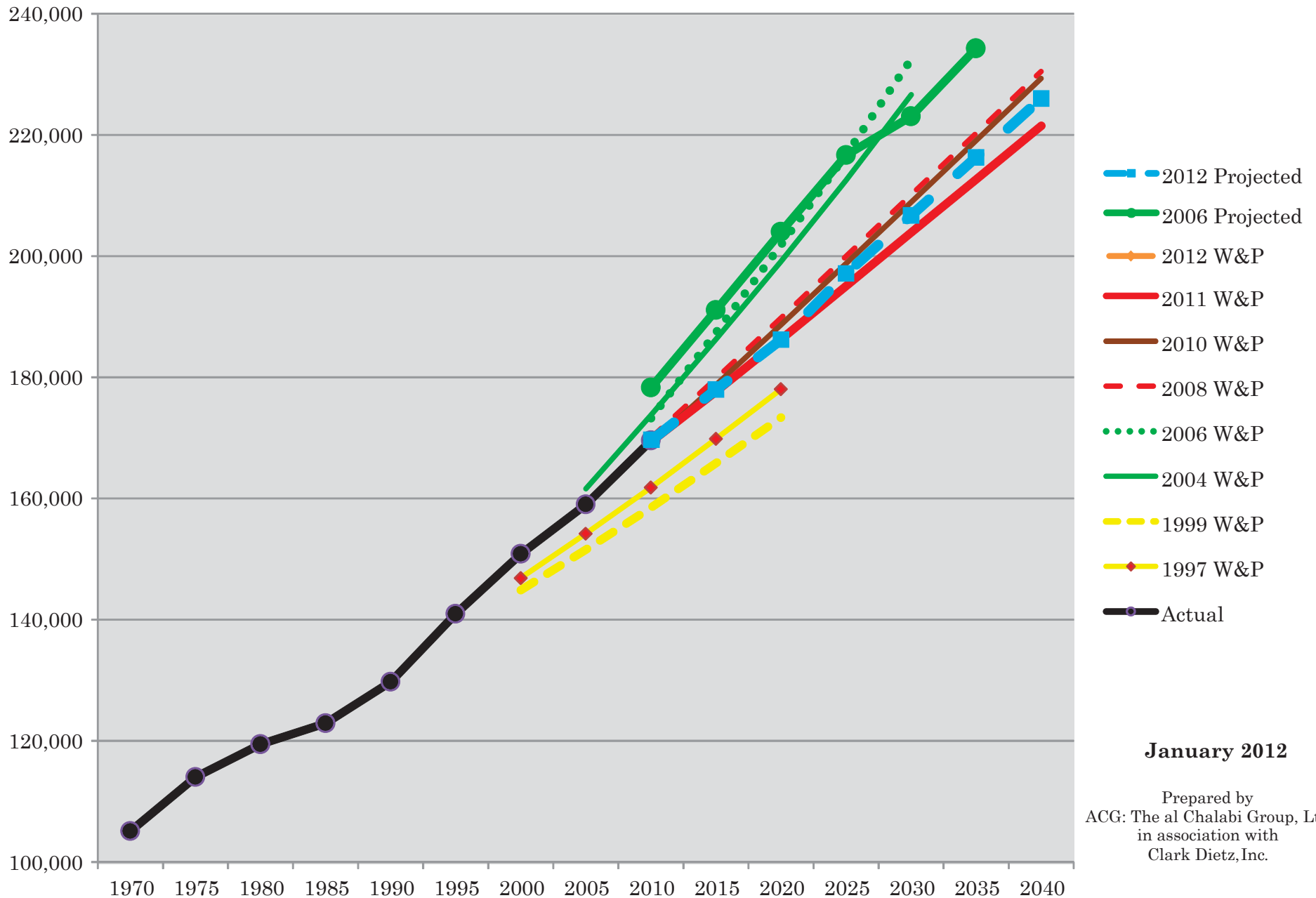
- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



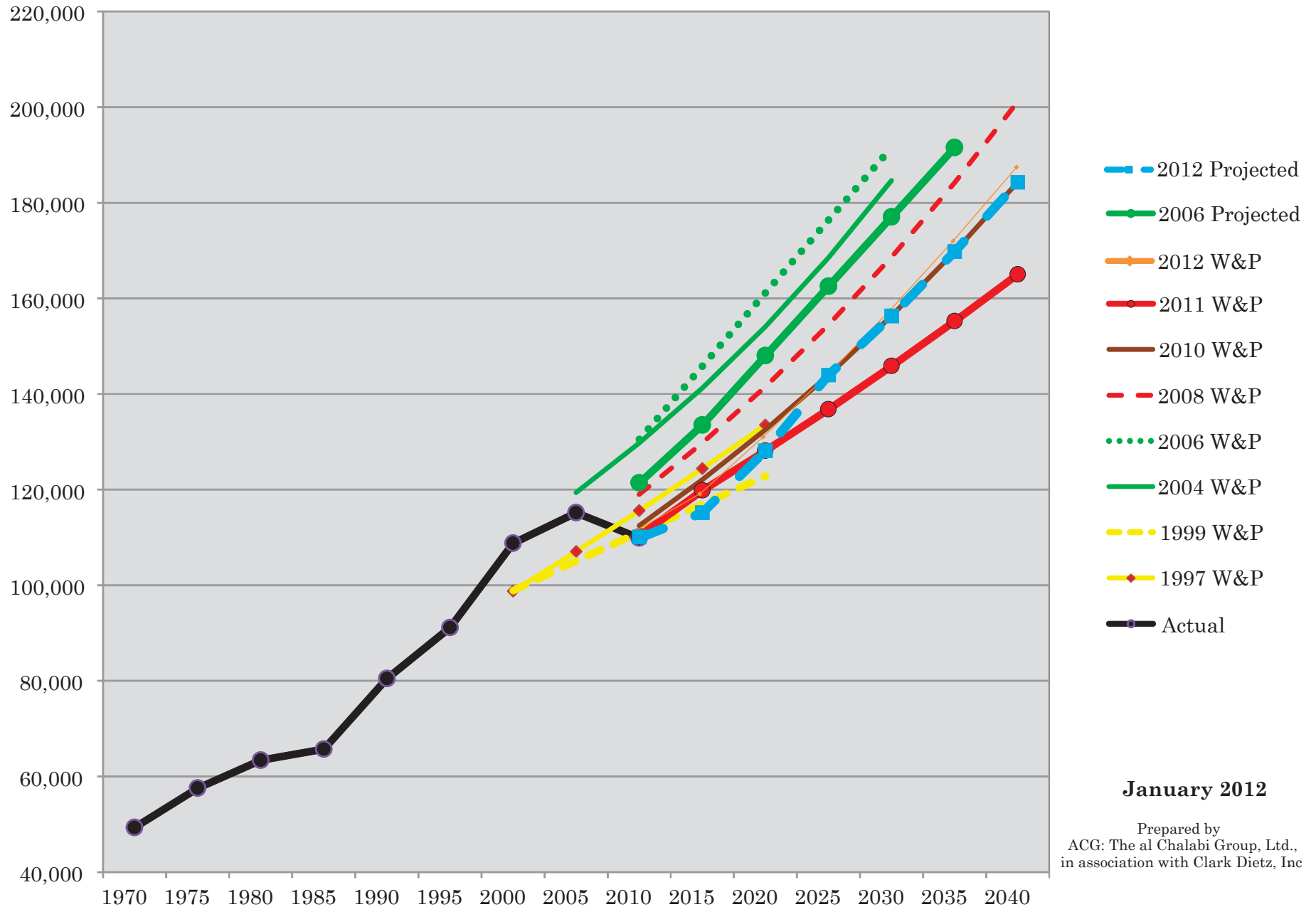
POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



January 2012

Prepared by
ACG: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd.
in association with
Clark Dietz, Inc.

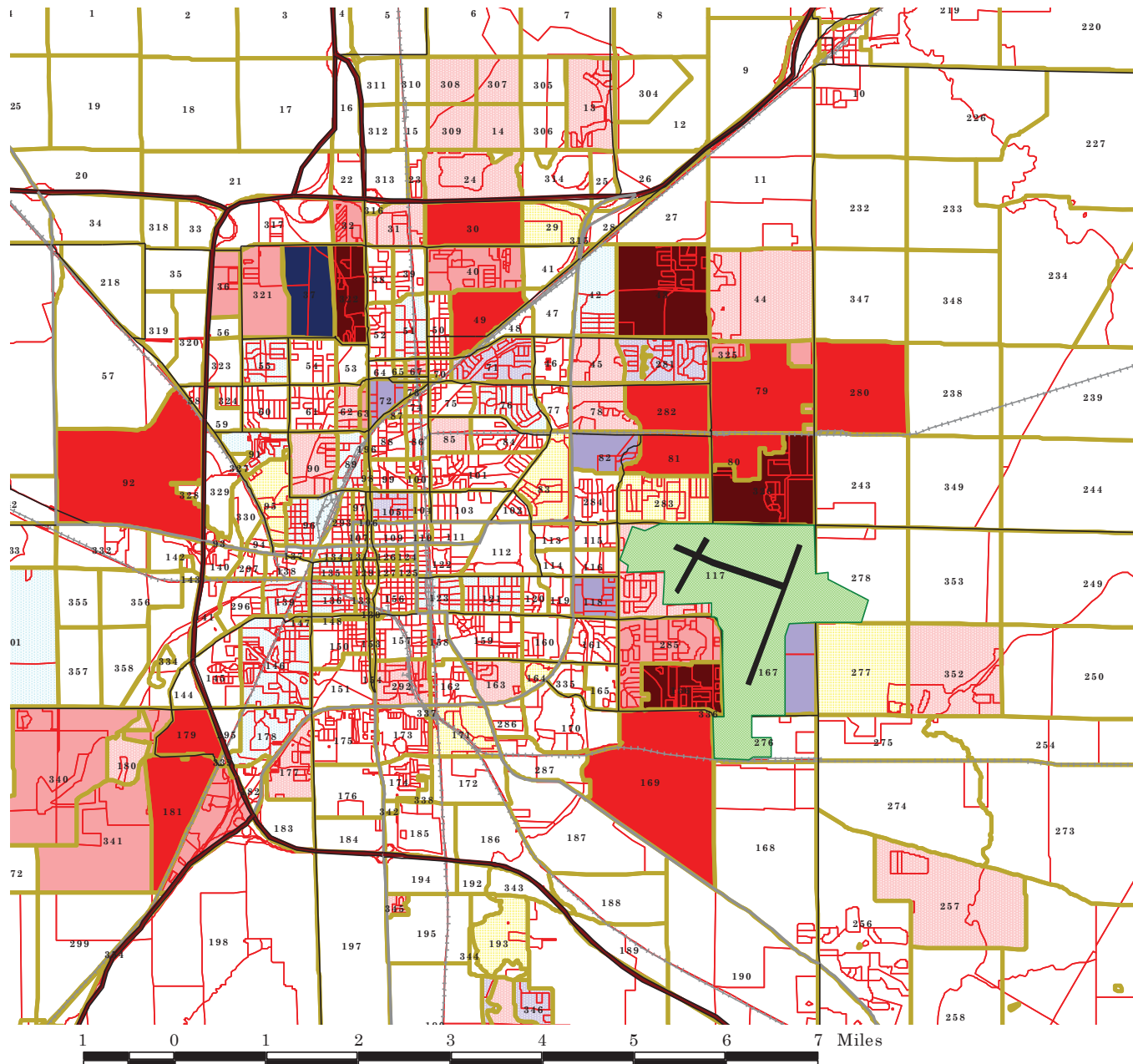
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS AND FORECASTS



January 2012

Prepared by
ACG: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd.,
in association with Clark Dietz, Inc

POPULATION CHANGE 2000-2010



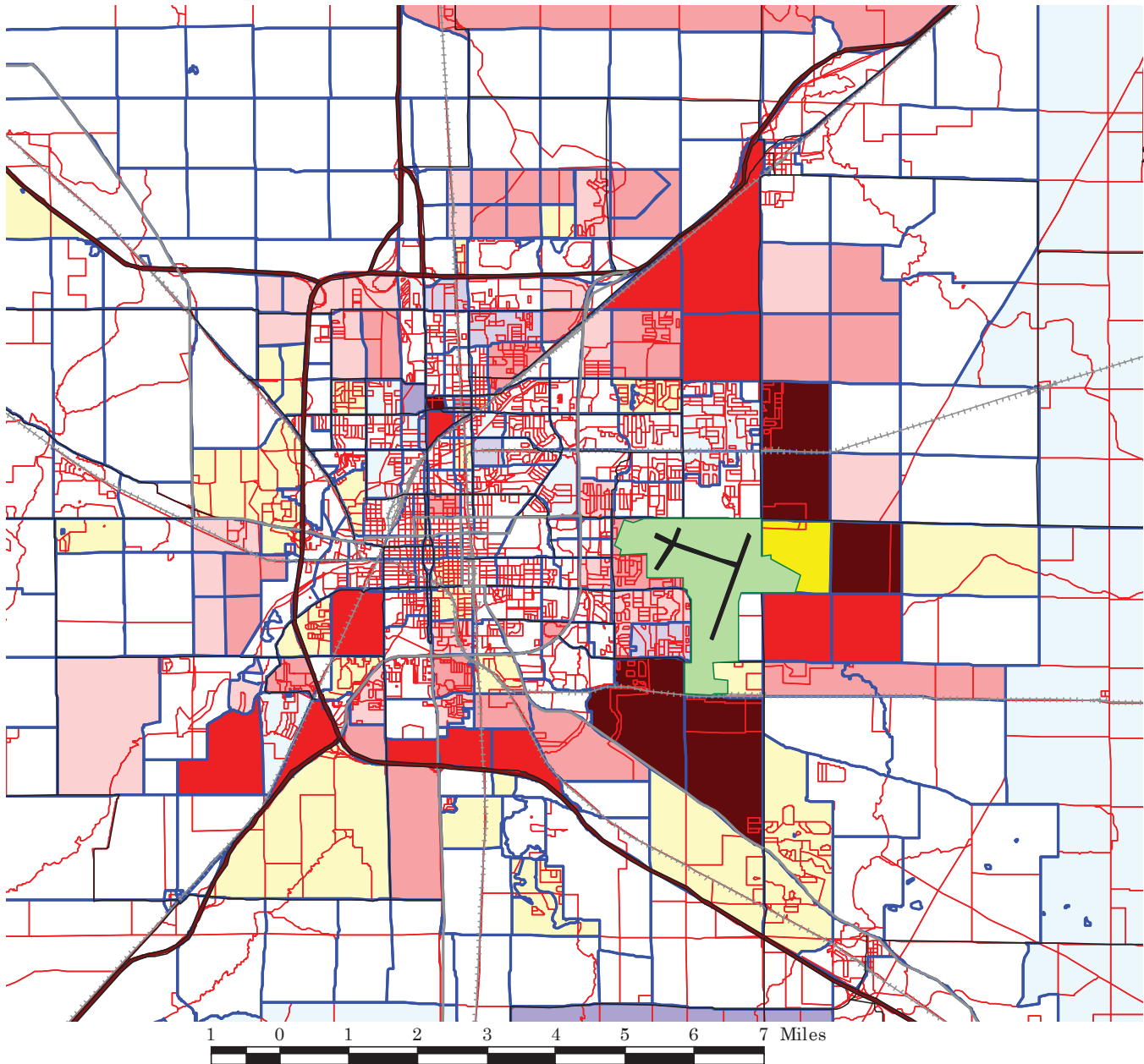
- 2010 Census Blocks
Population Change by TAZ
- Decrease 1,200+
 - Decrease 600 - 1,200
 - Decrease 300 - 600
 - Decrease 150 - 300
 - Decrease 75 - 150
 - No Change +/- 75
 - Increase 75 - 150
 - Increase 150 - 300
 - Increase 300 - 600
 - Increase 600 - 1,200
 - Increase 1,200+

August 2011

Prepared by
ACG: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd.
in association with Clark Dietz, Inc.



POPULATION CHANGE 2010-2035



**Population Change
2010 - 2035
2011 (EA) Preliminary**

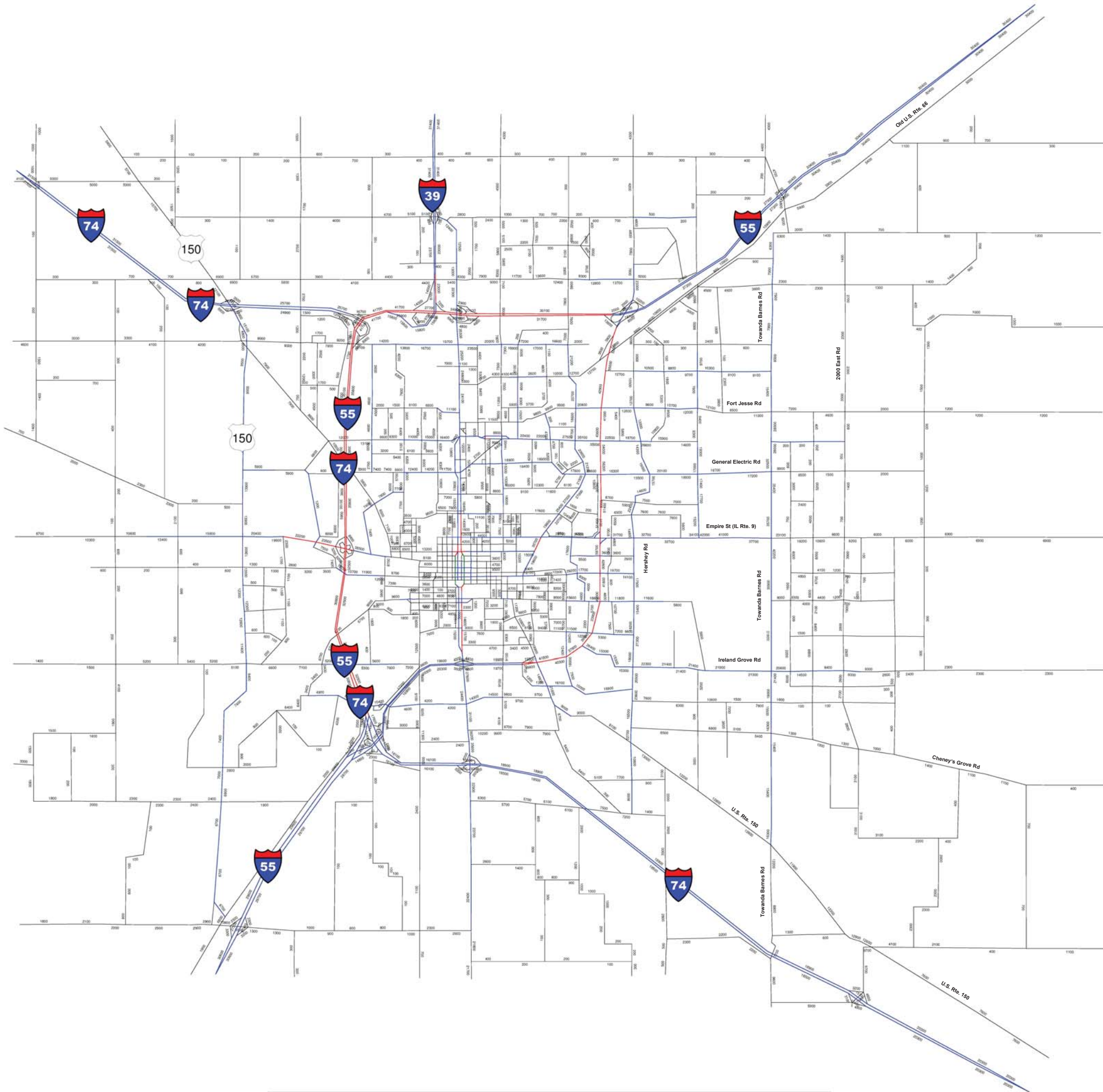
- 2010 Census Blocks
- Population Change by TAZ
- Decrease 1,200+
- Decrease 600 - 1,200
- Decrease 300 - 600
- Decrease 150 - 300
- Decrease 75 - 150
- No Change +/- 75
- Increase 75 - 150
- Increase 150 - 300
- Increase 300 - 600
- Increase 600 - 1,200
- Increase 1,200+

August 2011

Prepared by
ACG: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd.
in association with Clark Dietz, Inc.



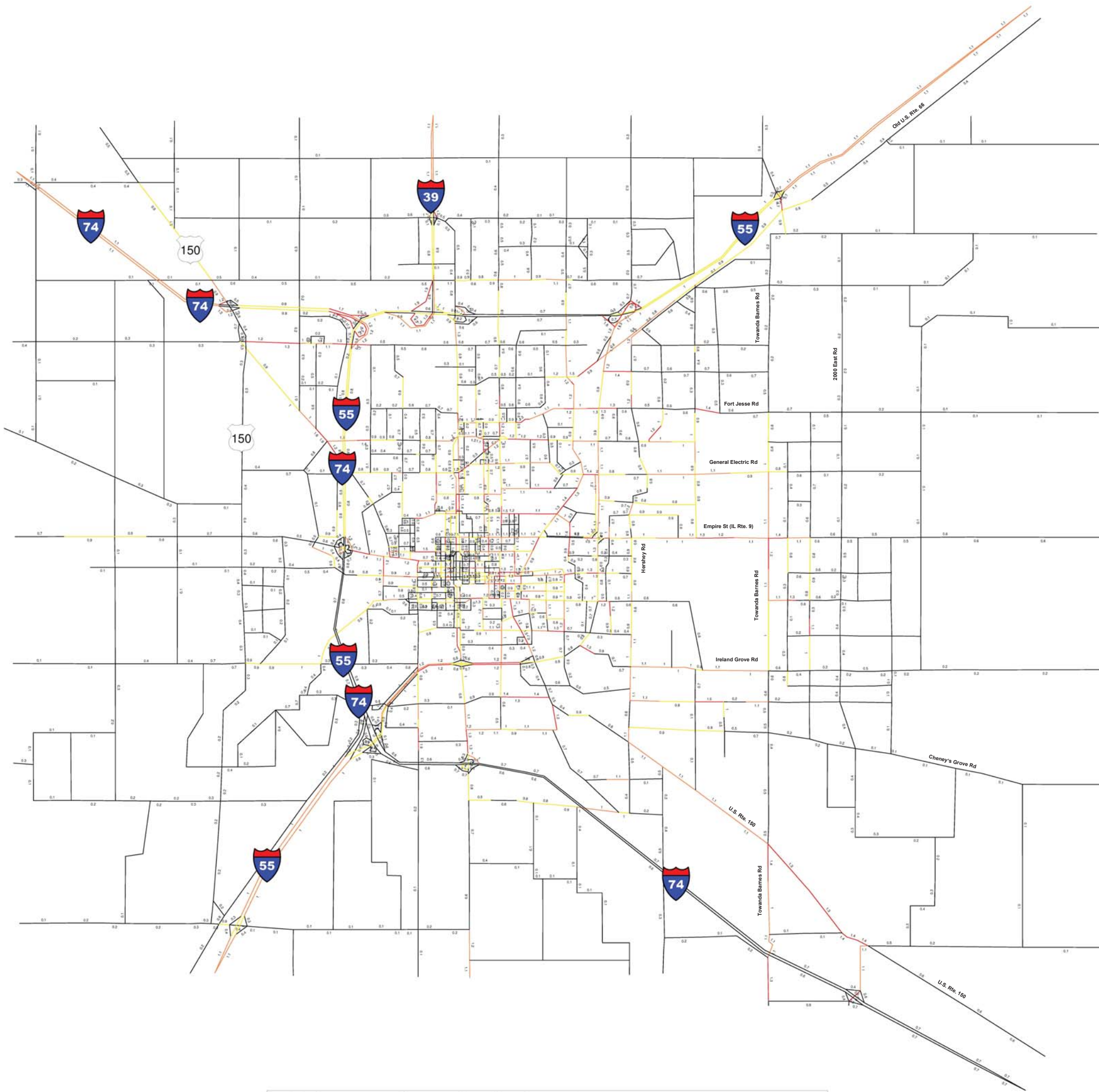
Year 2035 No-Build AADT



- Directional number of lanes=1
 - Directional number of lanes=2
 - Directional number of lanes=3
 - Directional number of lanes=4
- One-way coding is shown with arrows on the network

Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment

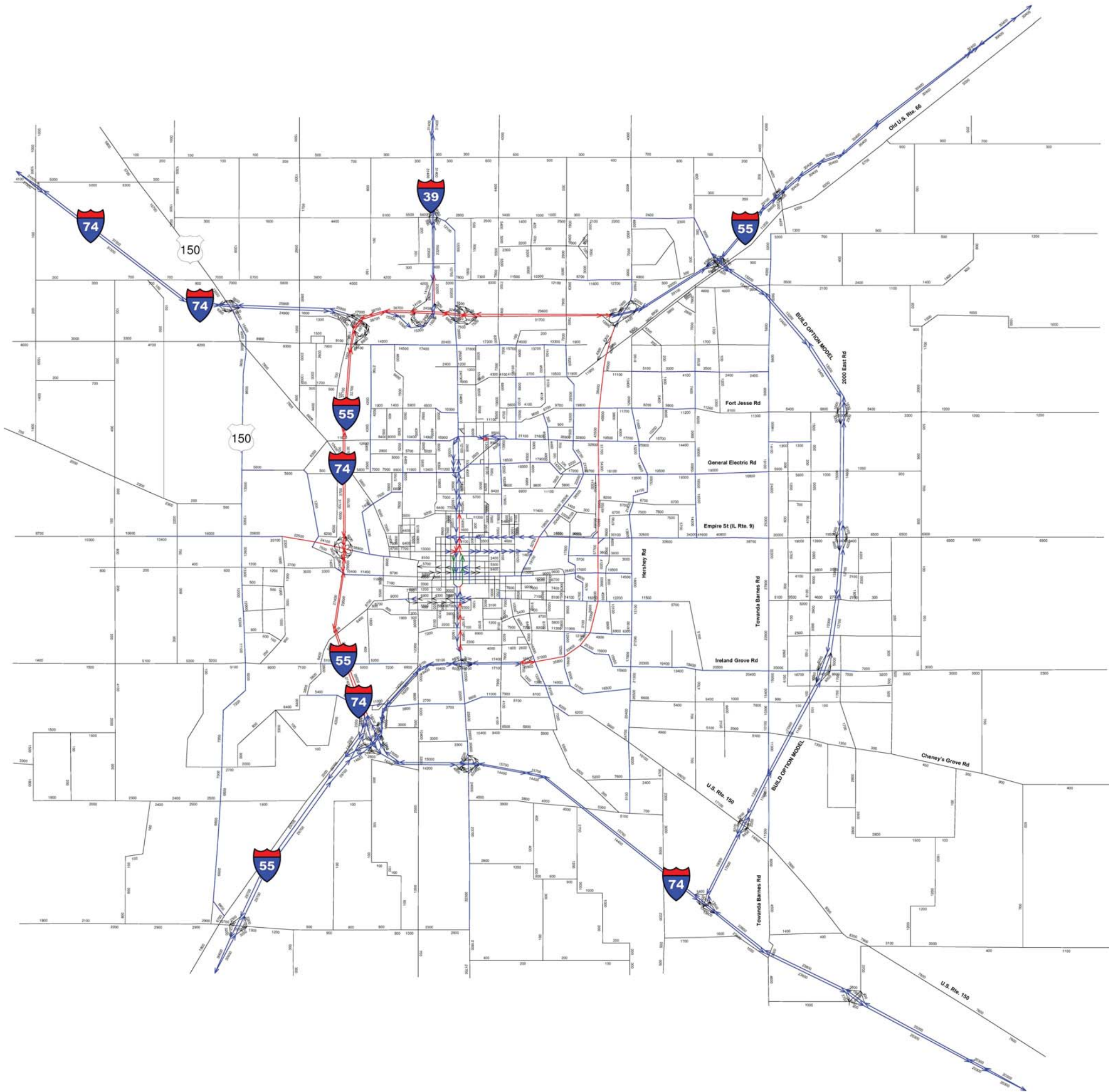
Year 2035 No-Build Volume to Capacity Ratio



- Volume to Capacity Ratio < 0.8
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio $= 0.8 - 1.0$
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio $= 1.0 - 1.2$
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio > 1.2
- One-way coding is shown with arrows on the network

Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment

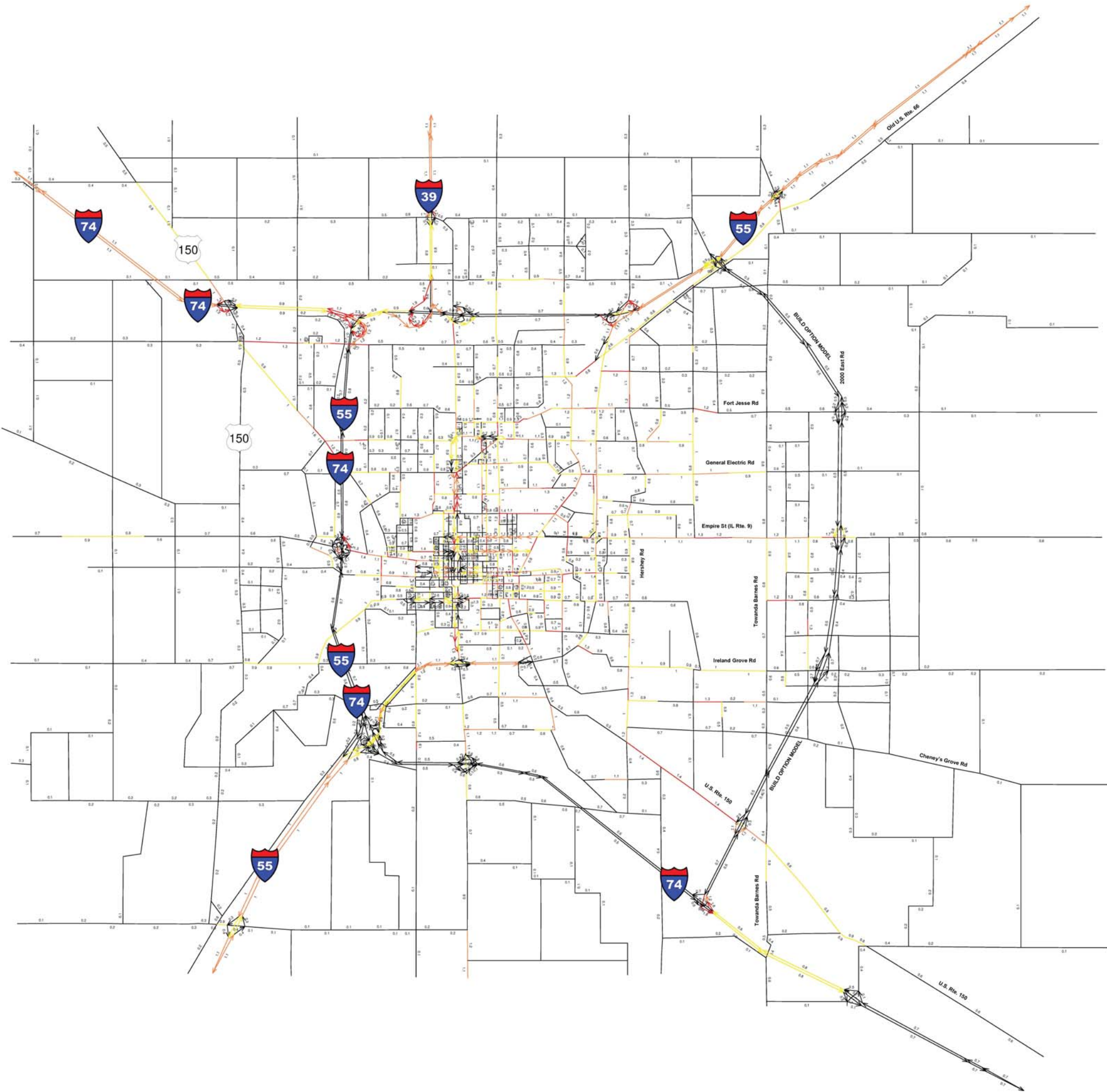
Year 2035 Build Option Model AADT



- Directional number of lanes=1
 - Directional number of lanes=2
 - Directional number of lanes=3
 - Directional number of lanes=4
- One-way coding is shown with arrows on the network

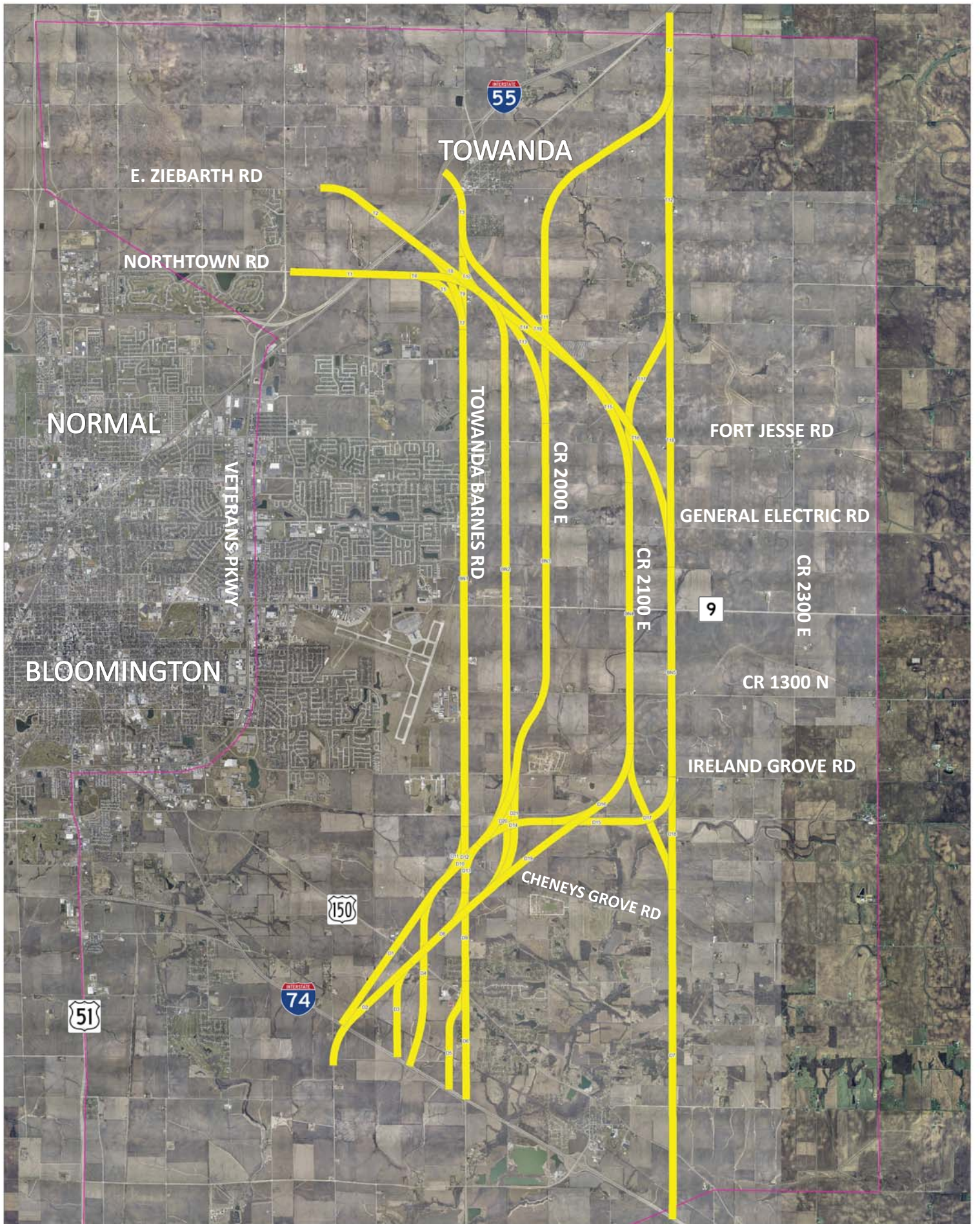
Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment

Year 2035 Build Option Model Volume to Capacity Ratio



- Volume to Capacity Ratio < 0.8
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio = 0.8 - 1.0
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio = 1.0 - 1.2
 - Volume to Capacity Ratio > 1.2
- One-way coding is shown with arrows on the network

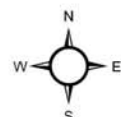
Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Travel Demand Model EAST SIDE HIGHWAY Environmental Assessment



129 Build Alternatives

Legend

- 129 Build Alternatives
- Project Study Limit



INITIAL SCREENING EVALUATION SUMMARY TABLES



Criteria	Alternatives																		
	T1 T5		T1 T5		T1 T5		T1 T5		T1 T5		T1 T5		T1 T6		T1 T6		T1 T6 T13		
	BN1		BN1		BN1		BN1		BN1		BN1		BN2		BN2		BN3		
	D11 D1		D11 D4		D12 D8 D2		D12 D8 D3		D12 D9 D5		D12 D9 D6		D10 D1		D10 D4		D13 D8 D2		D13 D8 D3
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES		
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES

Criteria	Alternatives																				
	T1 T6 T14 T15		T1 T6 T14 T15		T1 T6 T14 T15		T1 T6 T14 T15		T1 T6 T14 T15		T1 T6 T14 T15		T1 T6 T14 T15		T1 T6 T14 T16		T1 T6 T14 T16		T2 T7		
	BN4		BN4		BN4		BN4		BN4		BN4		BN4		BN5		BN5		BN1		
	D16 D14 D10 D1		D16 D14 D10 D4		D16 D14 D13 D8 D2		D16 D14 D13 D8 D3		D16 D14 D13 D9 D5		D16 D14 D13 D9 D6		D17 D7		D15 D14 D10 D1		D15 D14 D10 D4		D15 D14 D13 D8 D2		D15 D14 D13 D8 D3
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36			
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO			
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO		

Criteria	Alternatives																			
	T2 T7		T2 T7		T2 T8		T2 T8		T2 T8		T2 T8		T2 T8		T2 T8 T13		T2 T8 T13		T2 T8 T13	
	BN1		BN1		BN2		BN2		BN2		BN2		BN2		BN3		BN3		BN3	
	D12 D9 D5		D12 D9 D6		D10 D1		D10 D4		D13 D8 D2		D13 D8 D3		D13 D9 D5		D13 D9 D6		D10 D1		D10 D4	
#	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54		
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO		
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES			
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO		

Criteria	Alternatives																			
	T2 T8 T14 T15		T2 T8 T14 T15		T2 T8 T14 T15		T2 T8 T14 T16		T2 T8 T14 T16		T2 T8 T14 T16		T2 T8 T14 T16		T2 T8 T14 T16		T3 T9		T3 T9	
	BN4		BN4		BN4		BN5		BN5		BN5		BN5		BN5		BN1		BN1	
	D16 D14 D13 D9 D5		D16 D14 D13 D9 D6		D17 D7		D15 D14 D10 D1		D15 D14 D10 D4		D15 D14 D13 D8 D2		D15 D14 D13 D8 D3		D15 D14 D13 D9 D5		D15 D14 D13 D9 D6		D18 D7	
#	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72		
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO		
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES			
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	

INITIAL SCREENING EVALUATION SUMMARY TABLES



Criteria	Alternatives																													
	T3 T10		T3 T10		T3 T10		T3 T10		T3 T10 T13		T3 T10 T13		T3 T10 T13		T3 T10 T13		T3 T10 T13		T3 T10 T14 T15		T3 T10 T14 T15		T3 T10 T14 T15		T3 T10 T14 T15		T3 T10 T14 T15		T3 T10 T14 T15	
	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4
	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	D16 D14 D13 D9 D5	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6	D17 D7	D15 D14 D10 D1												
	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90												
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	

Criteria	Alternatives																															
	T3 T10 T14 T16		T3 T10 T14 T16		T3 T10 T14 T16		T3 T10 T14 T16		T3 T10 T14 T16		T3 T10 T14 T16		T4 T11		T4 T11		T4 T11		T4 T11		T4 T11		T4 T11		T4 T12 T17		T4 T12 T17		T4 T12 T17		T4 T12 T17	
	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	
	D15 D14 D10 D4	D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	D15 D14 D13 D9 D5	D15 D14 D13 D9 D6	D18 D7	D10 D1	D10 D4	D13 D8 D2	D13 D8 D3	D13 D9 D5	D13 D9 D6	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	D16 D14 D13 D9 D5	D16 D14 D13 D9 D6														
	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108														
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO		
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES			
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO		

Criteria	Alternatives																																	
	T4 T12 T17		T4 T12 T18		T4 T12 T18		T4 T12 T18		T4 T12 T18		T4 T12 T18		T4 T12 T18		T19		T19		T19		T19		T1 T6 T14 T15		T2 T8 T14 T15		T3 T10 T14 T15		T1 T6		T1 T6 T13		T2 T8	
	BN4	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN4	BN2	BN3	BN2	BN2	BN2		
	D17 D7	D15 D14 D10 D1	D15 D14 D10 D4	D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	D15 D14 D13 D9 D5	D15 D14 D13 D9 D6	D18 D7	D16 D14 D10 D1	D16 D14 D10 D4	D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	D19 D2	D19 D2	D19 D2	D19 D2	D19 D2	D19 D2	D20 D2	D21 D2	D20 D2														
	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126																
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO			
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO			

Criteria	Alternatives											
	T2 T8 T13		T3 T10		T3 T10 T13		E-W Alternative		TSM/TDM Alternative		Transit Alternative	
	BN3	BN2	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	US 150, Ireland Grove, Empire, GE, US 66					
	D21 D2	D20 D2	D21 D2	D21 D2	D21 D2	D21 D2						
	127	128	129	129	129	129						
1. Does the Alternative directly impact state or federally protected areas? ¹	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
2. Do the sections in the Alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport? ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
3. Does the Alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (i.e. Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?) ³	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

Legend and Notes

Alternatives with at least one red criteria did not pass the Initial Screening Evaluation

- Alternative containing Section BN1
- Alternative containing Section BN2
- Alternative containing Section BN3
- Alternative containing Section BN4
- Alternative containing Section BN5

¹ Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Illinois Nature Preserves, State and Federal Sites
² Clear zone requirements in accordance with expansion/operational initiatives presented in CIRA's Master Plan
³ Per IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual: A community is a "distinctive, homogenous, stable, self-contained unit of a larger spatial area defined by geographic boundaries, ethnic, or cultural characteristics of the inhabitants; a psychological unity among the residents; and the concentrated use of the area's facilities. " A community is "an entity with economic, social and perhaps political functions. It usually has a name identity and number of community service facilities such as business districts, religious institutions, schools, health centers and fire and police stations."

PURPOSE AND NEED SCREENING SUMMARY TABLES



Representative TDM Build Option	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	
Criteria	Sections															
	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T5	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T13	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	
	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN3	BN4	BN4	BN4	
#	1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	
1. Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	
2. Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	1.72	3.09	2.61	2.94	2.78	4.15	3.68	4.02	3.86	5.23	4.76	5.09	6.83	8.20	7.73	
3a. Decrease in congested road miles (v/c>0.8)	48	48	48	48	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	
3b. % change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	
4. Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ¹ (minutes saved)	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	
5. Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ² (minutes saved)	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	
6. % increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	26%	26%	26%	26%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	
7. Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ³	323	323	323	323	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	
8. Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	3,245	3,245	3,245	3,245	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	

Representative TDM Build Option	Build Option 5	Build Option 4	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 4	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 2	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	
Criteria	Sections															
	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T15	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T1 T6 T14 T16	T2 T7	T2 T7	T2 T7	T2 T7	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	T2 T8	
	BN4	BN4	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN5	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN1	BN2	BN2	BN2	BN2	
#	22	25	26	27	28	29	32	33	34	35	36	39	40	41	42	
1. Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	3.43%	1.82%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	1.82%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	
2. Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	8.06	19.76	9.04	10.41	9.94	10.28	22.03	1.93	3.30	2.82	3.15	2.98	4.35	3.87	4.21	
3a. Decrease in congested road miles (v/c>0.8)	58	41	58	58	58	58	41	48	48	48	48	58	58	58	58	
3b. % change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	4.05%	3.12%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	3.12%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	
4. Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ¹ (minutes saved)	1.35	0.16	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	0.16	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	
5. Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ² (minutes saved)	0.44	-0.04	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	-0.04	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	-2.91	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	
6. % increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	27%	23%	27%	27%	27%	27%	23%	26%	26%	26%	26%	27%	27%	27%	27%	
7. Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ³	558	210	558	558	558	558	210	323	323	323	323	558	558	558	558	
8. Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	4,806	2,737	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	2,737	3,245	3,245	3,245	3,245	4,806	4,806	4,806	4,806	

PURPOSE AND NEED SCREENING SUMMARY TABLES



Representative TDM Build Option	Build Option 5	Build Option 5	Build Option 5			
Criteria	T2 T8 T13	T3 T10	T3 T10 T13	E-W Alternative	TSM/TDM Alternative	Transit Alternative
	BN3	BN2	BN3			
	D21 D2	D20 D2	D21 D2			
#	127	128	129			
1. Average % Change in Accessibility (compared to No Build baseline)	3.43%	3.43%	3.43%	N/A		
2. Area between the alternative and planning boundary between I-55 and I-74 (sq miles)	5.34	4.67	5.80	11.47		
3a. Decrease in congested road miles (v/c>0.8)	58	58	58	51		
3b. % change in v/c >0.8 (% decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8)	4.05%	4.05%	4.05%	3.38%		
4. Travel time savings from 2 n/s pairs ¹ (minutes saved)	1.35	1.35	1.35	N/A	N/A	N/A
5. Travel time savings from 2 e/w pairs ² (minutes saved)	0.44	0.44	0.44	N/A		
6. % increase in area with travel within 5 minutes to the interstate (sq miles)	27%	27%	27%	N/A		
7. Cumulative travel time savings to/from major generator (vehicle hours per day) ³	558	558	558	315		
8. Network Wide Travel time savings (number of hours saved)	4,806	4,806	4,806	1,815		

Legend and Notes

Consistency with Purpose and Need				
Criteria	Least Consistent	Less Consistent	Neutral	Most Consistent
1 % Change Accessibility	0 - 1.5%	1.5-2.0%	2.0-3.0%	3.0%+
2 Sq. Mile between Alt & Planning Boundary	15.1+	10.1-15	5.1-10	≤ 5
3a Decrease in congested road miles	<30	31-50	51-70	71+
3b % decrease of roadways with v/c>0.8	<3%	3-4%	4-5%	5%+
4 Minutes saved between N/S pairs	less than 0.5	0.5-1	1-1.3	1.3+
5 Minutes saved between E/W pairs	-1 to -3	-1 to 0	0-0.1	0.1+
6 % increase access to interstate w/in 5 min (sq miles)	less than 10%	10-20%	20-30%	30% +
7 TT Savings between travel generators (hrs/day)	100-200	200-300	300-400	400+
8 Full network TT savings (hrs/day)	2,000-3,000	3,000-4,000	4,000-5,000	5,000+

	Alternative containing Section BN1
	Alternative containing Section BN2
	Alternative containing Section BN3
	Alternative containing Section BN4
	Alternative containing Section BN5

Alternatives with two or more red criteria did not pass the Purpose and Need Screening

¹ N/S Pairs: State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170) and TAZ 11, Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 168

² E/W Pairs: Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73) and TAZ 353, St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114) and TAZ 353

³ Major Travel Generators: Mitsubishi Motors (TAZ 57), Uptown Normal Multi-Modal (TAZ 73), Country Insurance (TAZ 83), St. Joseph Medical Center (TAZ 114), Central Illinois Regional Airport (TAZ 117), Bloomington CBD (TAZ 129), State Farm Insurance S Campus (TAZ 170)

MACRO ANALYSIS CRITERIA



Environmental

Floodways

Floodplain

Streams

Biologically
Significant/Class I
Streams

Drinking Water –
Surface Water

Wetlands

Special Waste

Forested Areas

Threatened &
Endangered
Species

Community and Economic

Residences

Businesses

Public Facilities

Parklands

Utilities

Noise Receptors

Agricultural and Cultural

Prime and
Important
Farmland

Farm Out Buildings

Farm Severances

Centennial/Sesqui-
centennial Farms

Farms

Historic Sites

Cemeteries

Archaeological
Sites

Design and Traffic

Right-of-Way
Acquisition

Length of Roadway

Safety Analysis

MACRO ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLES



Criteria	Unit of Measure	Corridors																							
		Sections	T1 T5 BN1 D11 D1	T1 T5 BN1 D11 D4	T1 T5 BN1 D12 D8 D2	T1 T5 BN1 D12 D8 D3	T1 T6 BN2 D10 D1	T1 T6 BN2 D10 D4	T1 T6 BN2 D13 D8 D2	T1 T6 BN2 D13 D8 D3	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D10 D1	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D10 D4	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D13 D8 D2	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D13 D8 D3	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D1	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D4	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	T1 T6 T14 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	T1 T6 T14 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D1	T1 T6 T14 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D4	T1 T6 T14 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	T1 T6 T14 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	T2 T7 BN1 D11 D1	T2 T7 BN1 D11 D4	T2 T7 BN1 D12 D8 D2
		#	1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	26	27	28	29	33	34	35
Environmental																									
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	0	0	0
	Floodways (acres affected)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Streams (number of crossings)		3	3	4	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	4
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)		1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.3	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0
	Wetland Areas (number affected)		1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Special Waste	CERCLIS, LUST, RCRA Sites (number affected)		4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
T&E Species	Threatened and Endangered Species (number affected)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community and Economic																									
Residences	Homes, including Farm Homes (number displaced)		42	40	39	39	15	13	10	10	11	9	6	6	13	11	8	8	9	7	4	4	42	40	39
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)		7	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	7	7	7
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)		5	5	5	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4
	Public Facilities with Access Change (number affected)		6	6	6	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	5	5	5
Section 4(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)		11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Parklands (number affected)		2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)		7	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	7	7	7
	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)		1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Noise	Noise Receptors (number within 500 feet of corridor)		263	252	255	253	44	33	37	35	40	29	33	31	37	26	30	28	22	11	15	13	264	253	256
Agricultural																									
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)		574	588	602	578	703	716	731	707	720	734	748	724	806	819	834	810	869	882	897	873	588	602	616
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)		21	22	33	32	32	33	34	33	13	14	15	14	19	20	21	20	14	15	16	15	22	23	34
Tracts	Tract Severances (number affected)		8	8	13	10	15	15	20	17	20	20	25	22	22	22	27	24	26	26	31	28	12	12	17
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)		24	21	30	26	17	14	19	15	26	23	28	24	31	28	33	29	30	27	32	28	28	25	34
Farms	Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms (number affected)		3	3	3	3	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	3	3	3
	Farms Otherwise Affected (number affected)		57	56	60	57	59	58	60	57	58	57	59	56	64	63	65	62	69	68	70	67	53	52	56
Cultural																									
Cultural	Historic Sites (number affected)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cemeteries (number affected)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)		0	0	0	0	19	19	19	19	30	30	30	30	75	75	75	75	61	61	61	61	6	6	6
Design																									
Right-of-Way	Right-of-Way Acquisition (acres)		627	639	659	636	714	727	744	720	717	730	746	723	793	805	822	798	875	888	905	881	645	658	678
Length of Roadway	Length in Miles		11.4	11.6	12.1	11.7	12.1	12.3	12.7	12.2	12.3	12.5	12.9	12.5	13.9	14.1	14.5	14.0	14.8	15.0	15.4	14.9	11.6	11.8	12.3
Traffic																									
Safety Analysis	Percent Change in Total Crashes		-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%
Type of Elimination ¹			R	R	R	R	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	R

MACRO ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLES



Criteria	Unit of Measure	Corridors																							
		Sections	T2 T7 BN1 D12 D8 D3	T2 T8 BN2 D10 D1	T2 T8 BN2 D10 D4	T2 T8 BN2 D13 D8 D2	T2 T8 BN2 D13 D8 D3	T2 T8 T13 BN3 D10 D1	T2 T8 T13 BN3 D10 D4	T2 T8 T13 BN3 D13 D8 D2	T2 T8 T13 BN3 D13 D8 D3	T2 T8 T14 T15 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D1	T2 T8 T14 T15 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D4	T2 T8 T14 T15 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	T2 T8 T14 T15 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D3	T2 T8 T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D1	T2 T8 T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D4	T2 T8 T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	T2 T8 T14 T16 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	T3 T9 BN1 D11 D1	T3 T9 BN1 D11 D4	T3 T9 BN1 D12 D8 D2	T3 T9 BN1 D12 D8 D3	T3 T10 BN2 D10 D1	T3 T10 BN2 D10 D4
		#	36	39	40	41	42	45	46	47	48	51	52	53	54	58	59	60	61	65	66	67	68	71	72
Environmental																									
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Streams (number of crossings)	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	4	3	2	2	
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	0.0	1.5	1.3	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.3	
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	
Special Waste	CERCLIS, LUST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	4	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	6	6	6	4	4	
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
T&E Species	Threatened and Endangered Species (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Community and Economic																									
Residences	Homes, including Farm Homes (number displaced)	39	15	13	10	10	11	9	6	6	13	11	8	8	9	7	4	4	55	53	52	52	27	25	
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	7	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	11	11	11	11	9	9	
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	1	1	
	Public Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	6	1	1	
Section 4(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	
	Parklands (number affected)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	4	4	
	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	
Noise	Noise Receptors (number within 500 feet of corridor)	254	45	34	38	36	41	30	34	32	38	27	31	29	23	12	16	14	299	288	291	289	80	69	
Agricultural																									
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	592	710	724	738	714	728	741	756	732	813	826	841	817	876	890	905	880	534	548	562	537	651	665	
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	33	33	34	35	34	14	15	16	15	20	21	22	21	15	16	17	16	20	21	32	31	31	32	
Tracts	Tract Severances (number affected)	14	19	19	24	21	24	24	29	26	26	26	31	28	30	30	35	32	7	7	12	9	16	16	
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	30	17	14	19	15	26	23	28	24	31	28	33	29	30	27	32	28	28	25	34	30	17	14	
Farms	Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms (number affected)	3	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	4	4	4	4	8	8	
	Farms Otherwise Affected (number affected)	53	56	55	57	54	55	54	56	53	61	60	62	59	66	65	67	64	55	54	58	55	53	52	
Cultural																									
Cultural	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	6	20	20	20	20	31	31	31	31	76	76	76	76	63	63	63	63	23	23	23	23	22	22	
Design																									
Right-of-Way	Right-of-Way Acquisition (acres)	655	729	741	758	734	731	744	761	737	807	820	837	813	889	902	919	895	599	612	632	609	678	690	
Length of Roadway	Length in Miles	11.8	12.1	12.3	12.7	12.2	12.3	12.5	12.9	12.5	13.9	14.1	14.5	14.1	14.8	15.0	15.4	14.9	11.0	11.2	11.6	11.2	11.3	11.5	
Traffic																									
Safety Analysis	Percent Change in Total Crashes	-53.8%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-53.8%	-43.3%	-43.3%	
Type of Elimination ¹		R	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	R	R	-	-	

MACRO ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLES



Criteria	Unit of Measure	Corridors																	
		Sections	T4 T12 T18 BN5 D15 D14 D10 D4	T4 T12 T18 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D2	T4 T12 T18 BN5 D15 D14 D13 D8 D3	T19 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D1	T19 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D4	T19 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	T19 BN4 D19 D2	T1 T6 T14 T15 BN4 D19 D2	T2 T8 T14 T15 BN4 D19 D2	T3 T10 T14 T15 BN4 D19 D2	T1 T6 BN2 D20 D2	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D21 D2	T2 T8 BN2 D20 D2	T2 T8 T13 BN3 D21 D2	T3 T10 BN2 D20 D2	T3 T10 T13 BN3 D21 D2	E-W Only Alt
		#	111	112	113	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	E-W
Environmental																			
Water Quality/Water Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	13	13	13	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Streams (number of crossings)	4	5	4	4	4	5	6	6	6	6	3	3	3	3	3	3	8	
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	0.9	0.0	0.0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	
Special Waste	CERCLIS, LUST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	2	1	4	3	19	
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
T&E Species	Threatened and Endangered Species (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	
Community and Economic																			
Residences	Homes, including Farm Homes (number displaced)	12	9	9	22	20	17	15	6	6	18	8	4	8	4	16	12	106	
Business	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	0	0	4	5	0	5	0	9	4	14	
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	
	Public Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	8	
Section 4(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
	Parklands (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	
	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Noise	Noise Receptors (number within 500 feet of corridor)	17	21	19	73	62	66	62	26	27	62	35	27	37	29	73	65	1345	
Agricultural																			
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	885	900	876	750	764	778	768	824	831	772	745	762	753	771	694	712	105	
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	36	37	36	18	19	20	10	11	12	10	24	5	25	6	23	4	1	
Tracts	Tract Severances (number affected)	18	23	20	19	19	24	18	21	25	22	18	28	21	32	18	28	0	
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	26	31	27	29	26	31	29	31	31	31	14	30	13	29	12	28	0	
Farms	Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms (number affected)	10	10	10	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	7	8	7	8	7	5	
	Farms Otherwise Affected (number affected)	76	78	75	58	57	59	58	64	61	58	52	42	49	39	48	38	63	
Cultural																			
Cultural	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	98	98	98	76	76	76	76	74	75	77	19	30	20	31	22	33	34	
Design																			
Right-of-Way	Right-of-Way Acquisition (acres)	898	915	891	751	764	781	764	805	820	769	750	754	763	767	714	717	225	
Length of Roadway	Length in Miles	15.1	15.5	15.1	13.0	13.2	13.6	13.3	14.1	14.2	13.4	12.7	13.0	12.8	13.0	12.0	12.3	14.1	
Traffic																			
Safety Analysis	Percent Change in Total Crashes	-42.9%	-42.9%	-42.9%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-43.3%	-	
Type of Elimination ¹		P	P	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	R	

Legend and Notes

Criteria used as differentiating criteria are highlighted

- ¹ Type of Elimination:
 R = Residential Impacts
 P = Prime and Important Farmland Impacts
 O = Other Considerations
 (-) = Carried Forward

	Alternative containing Section BN1
	Alternative containing Section BN2
	Alternative containing Section BN3
	Alternative containing Section BN4
	Alternative containing Section BN5

ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA



Environmental	Community and Economic	Agricultural and Cultural	Design and Traffic	Sustainability
Floodways	Residences	Prime & Important Farmland	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Area of New Pavement
Floodplain	Businesses	Farm Out Buildings	Termini Connections	Primary Agricultural Land within ROW
Streams	Public Facilities	Farm Severances	Area of Total Pavement	Tracts b/w Alignment & 2035 Land Use
Biologically Significant /Class I Streams	Parklands	Centennial/ Sesqui-centennial Farms	Constructability	Agriculture b/w Alignment & 2035 Land Use
Drinking Water – Surface Water	Utilities	Farms Otherwise Affected	Safety Analysis	ROW within Watershed
Wetlands	Utility Infrastructure	Historic Sites		Riparian Areas
Special Waste	Noise Receptors	Cemeteries		Highly Erodible Soils
Forested Areas		Archaeological Sites		Proximity to Existing Bike/Ped Path
Threatened & Endangered Species				

ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLES



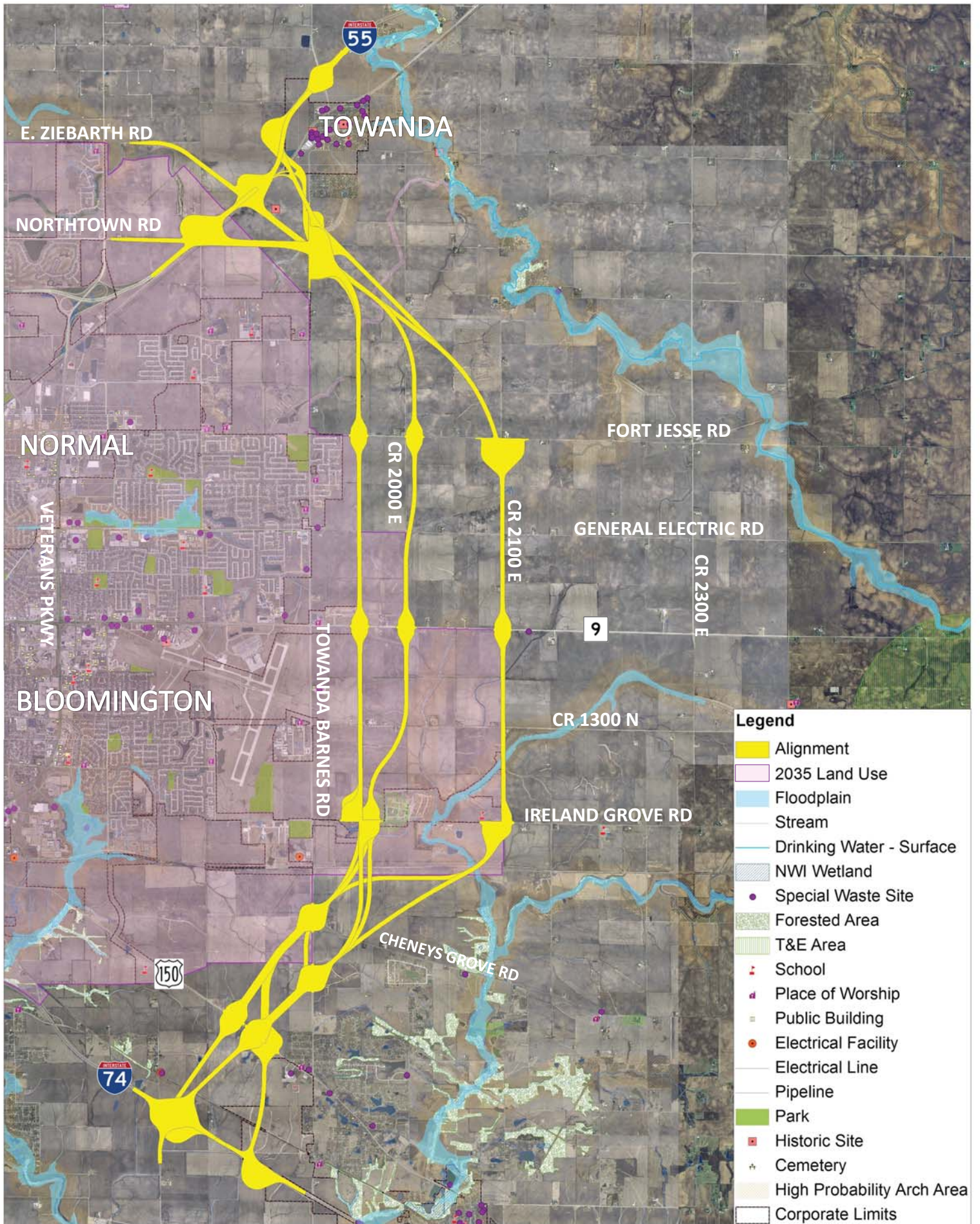
Criteria	Unit of Measure	Alignments												
		Sections	T19 BN4 D16 D14 D10 D4	T19 BN4 D16 D14 D13 D8 D2	T19 BN4 D19 D2	T1 T6 T14 T15 BN4 D19 D2	T2 T8 T14 T15 BN4 D19 D2	T3 T10 T14 T15 BN4 D19 D2	T1 T6 BN2 D20 D2	T1 T6 T13 BN3 D21 D2	T2 T8 BN2 D20 D2	T2 T8 T13 BN3 D21 D2	T3 T10 BN2 D20 D2	T3 T10 T13 BN3 D21 D2
		#	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129
Environmental														
Water Quality/Resources	Floodplain (acres affected)	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Floodways (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Biologically Significant Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Class I Streams (number of crossings)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Streams - Main Stems (number of crossings)	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Streams - Tributaries (number of crossings)	3	5	6	6	6	6	4	4	4	4	4	4	
	Drinking Water Supplies - Surface Water (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Wetlands	Wetland Areas (acres affected)	2.9	3.0	3.0	0.9	0.1	3.6	0.9	0.9	0.1	0.1	3.6	3.6	
	Wetland Areas (number affected)	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	
Special Waste	CERCLIS, LUST, RCRA Sites (number affected)	5	4	4	1	1	5	2	1	2	1	5	4	
Forested Area	Forested Area (acre affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
T&E Species	Threatened & Endangered Species (number of species affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Community and Economic														
Residences	Homes, including Farm Homes (number displaced)	10	9	8	9	9	9	13	10	13	9	13	9	
Businesses	Commercial Buildings (number displaced)	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	0	7	0	
Public Facilities	Public Facilities (number displaced)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	
	Public Facilities with Access Change (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Section 4(f) Impacts	Parklands (acres affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Parklands (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Utilities	Utilities Crossings (number of conflicts)	5	6	6	6	8	6	6	6	8	8	6	6	
	Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Noise	Noise Receptors (number of receptors within 500 feet of corridor)	20	18	17	13	15	28	35	27	37	30	50	43	
Agricultural														
Prime and Important Farmland	Prime and Important Farmland (acres affected)	742	701	739	790	795	773	738	726	731	730	685	709	
Farmsteads	Farm Outbuildings (number affected)	23	20	12	23	24	23	34	24	36	26	34	24	
Tracts	Tract Severances (number affected)	30	33	32	30	29	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	
	Tracts with Access Change (number affected)	23	24	23	24	25	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	
Farms	Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms (number affected)	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	Farms Otherwise Affected (number affected)	41	34	37	48	47	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	
Cultural														
Cultural	Historic Sites (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cemeteries (number affected)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	High Probability Archaeological Sites (acres affected)	103	103	103	76	70	101	58	55	45	49	59	80	
Design														
Right-of-Way	Right-of-Way Acquisition (acres)	772	724	762	820	809	796	775	755	751	743	714	730	
Termini Connections	Engineering and Operational Consideration of North Termini	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MED	MED	HIGH	MED	MED	MED	MED	HIGH	HIGH	
	Engineering and Operational Consideration of South Termini	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	
Area of Total Pavement	Area of Total Pavement (square miles)	0.34	0.33	0.39	0.42	0.39	0.41	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.34	0.30	0.30	
Constructability	Desirable from an Engineering Perspective (Y/N)	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Sustainability														
Area of New Pavement	Area of New Pavement Required (square miles)	0.23	0.23	0.29	0.32	0.29	0.30	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.26	0.21	0.22	
Farmland Preservation	Area of Farmland Consumed Outside of 2035 Land Use Plan (acres within alignments)	575	560	611	581	650	646	479	505	536	574	497	559	
	Number of Farm Tracts Located between the 2035 Land Use Plan and Alignments	163	153	165	150	158	163	91	113	99	121	102	124	
	Area of Farmland Consumed Outside of 2035 Land Use Plan (acres between alignment and Land Use Plan) (calculated for final six alignments only)	-	-	-	5006	5254	-	2286	3174	2524	3413	-	-	
Watershed	Amount of Right-of-Way within Each Watershed (% watershed affected)													
	Six Mile Creek-Mackinaw River Watershed	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	1.4%	0.9%	0.4%	1.4%	1.4%	0.9%	0.9%	0.4%	0.4%	
	Money Creek Watershed	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	
	Sugar Creek Watershed	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
	Kickapoo Creek Watershed	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	
Riparian Areas	Riparian Areas (acres affected)	16.3	14.0	15.8	24.1	13.8	15.3	20.6	19.1	9.6	8.8	6.9	10.2	
Highly Erodible Soils	Highly Erodible Soils (acres affected)	30.4	26.3	40.7	40.7	44.7	40.6	22.6	26.7	26.5	30.7	22.4	26.6	
Bike/Pedestrian Access	Is Alternative Adjacent to Proposed or Existing Bike/Ped Network? (Y/N)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	
Traffic														
Safety Analysis	Percent Change in Total Crashes	-46.7	-47.2	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	-46.7	
	Type of Elimination ¹	T	T	T	A/S	A/S	T	-	-	-	-	T	T	

Legend and Notes

Criteria used as differentiating criteria are highlighted

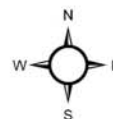
- ¹ Type of Elimination:
 T = Termini Connections
 C = Constructability
 R = Residential Impacts
 A/S = Agricultural Impacts and Sustainability
 (-) = Carried Forward

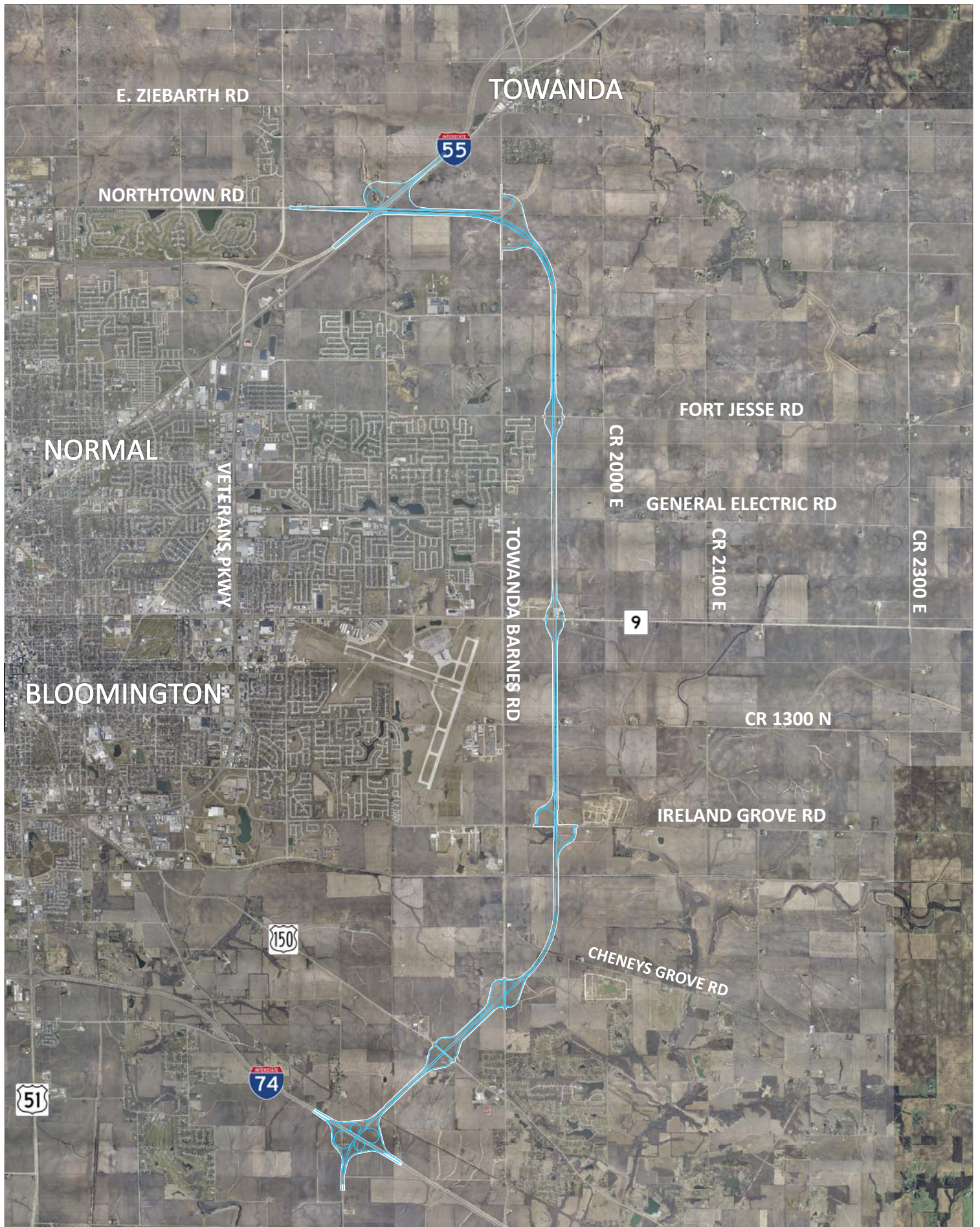
	Alternative containing Section BN2
	Alternative containing Section BN3
	Alternative containing Section BN4



Alignment Analysis Resource Exhibit

0 0.5 1 Miles

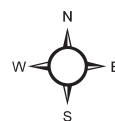
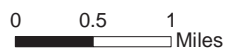


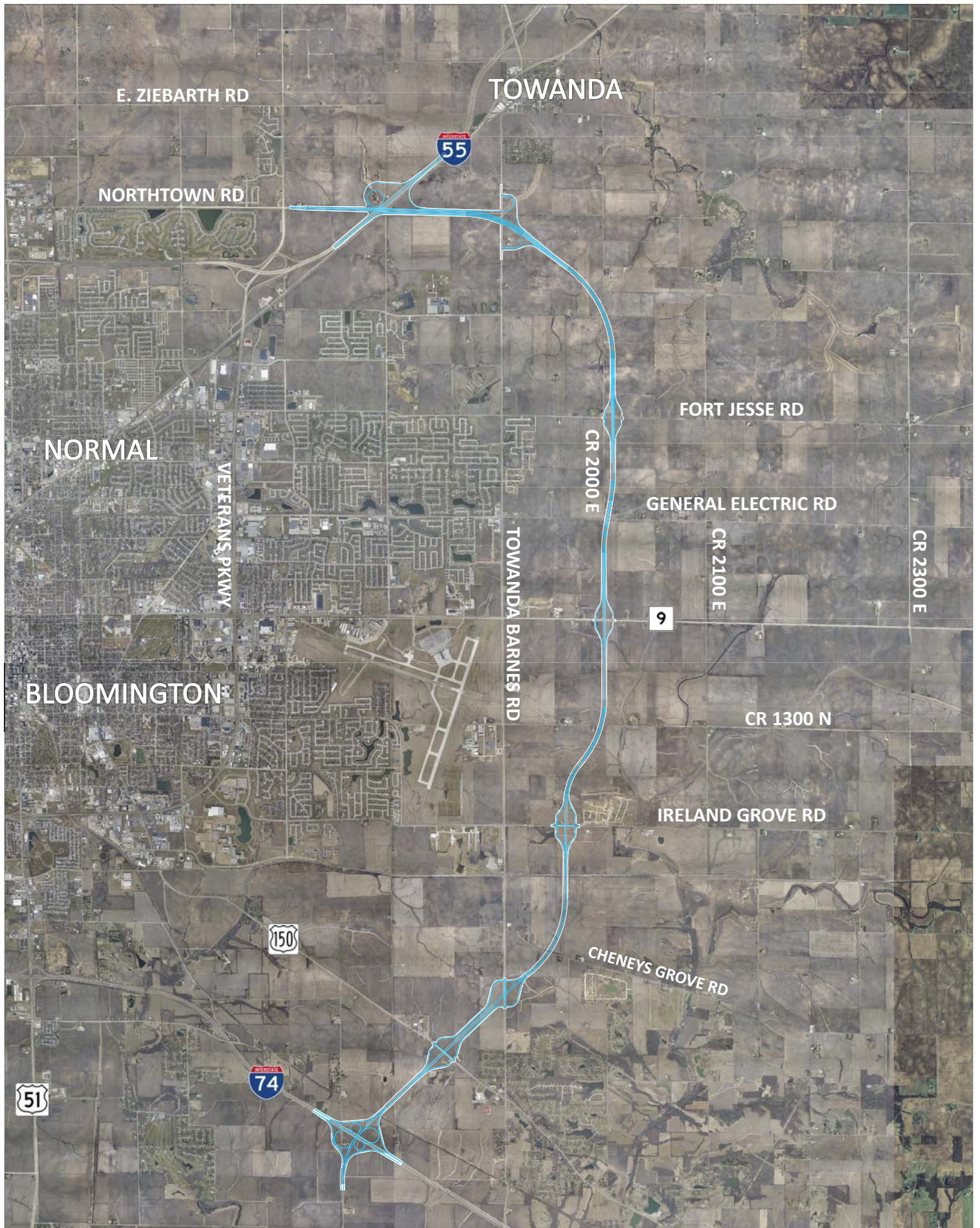


Alignment 124

Legend

- Edge of Pavement
- Right-of-Way

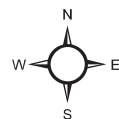


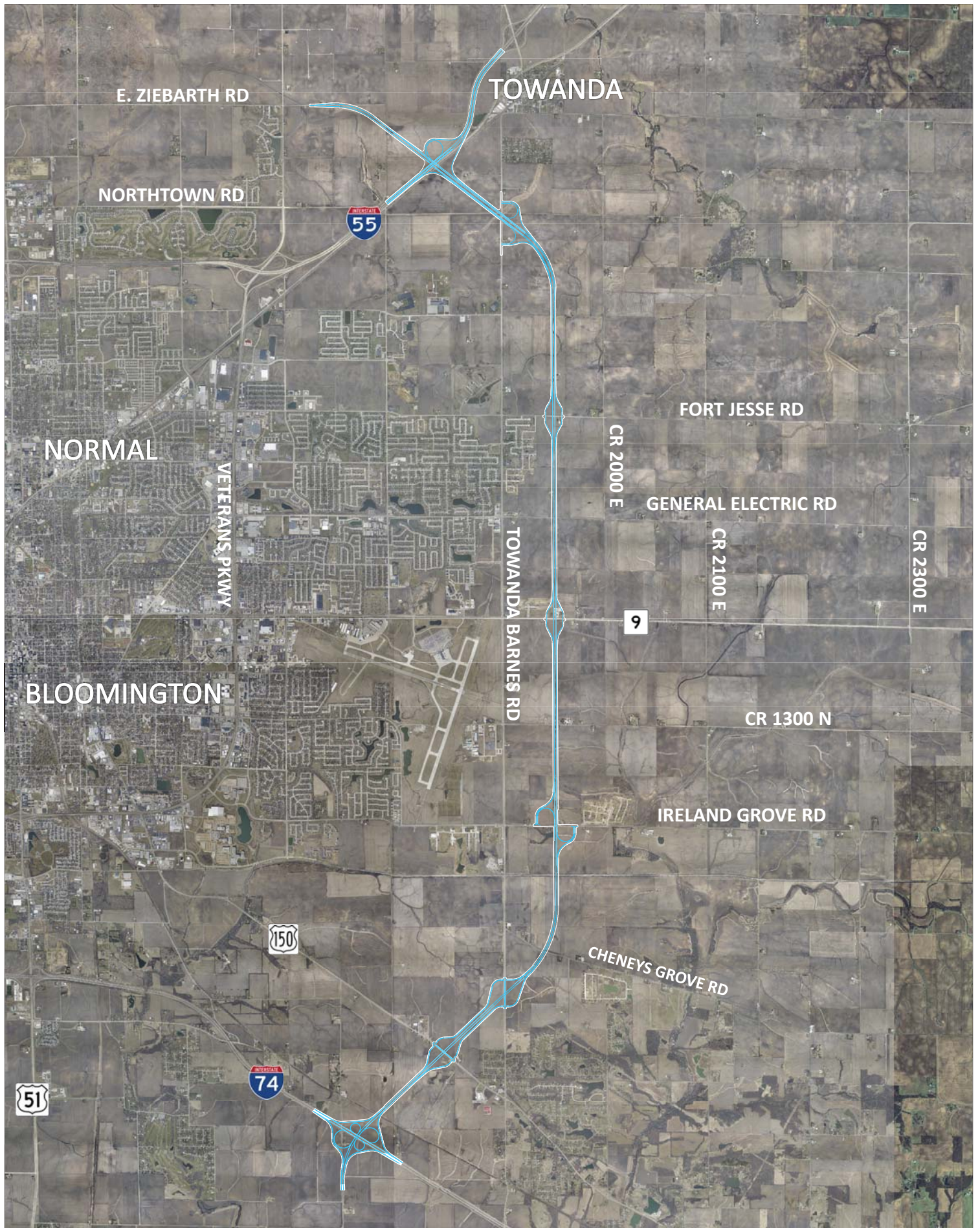


Alignment 125

Legend

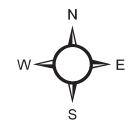
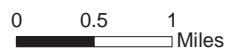
- Edge of Pavement
- Right-of-Way

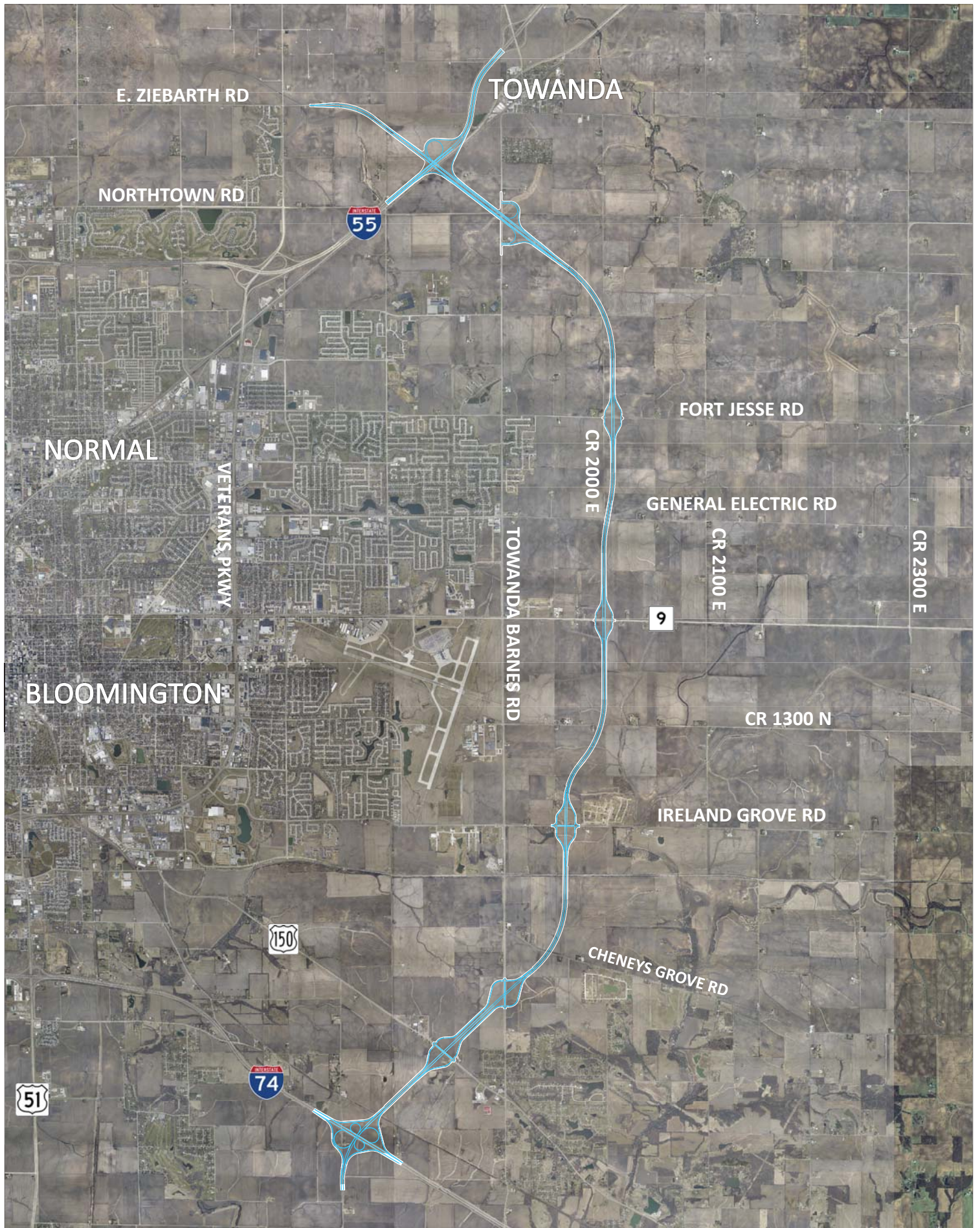




Alignment 126

- Legend**
- Edge of Pavement
 - Right-of-Way

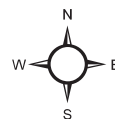




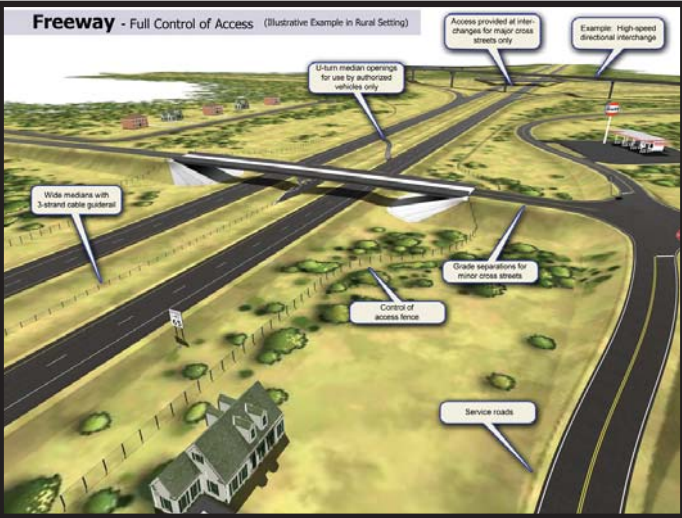
Alignment 127

Legend

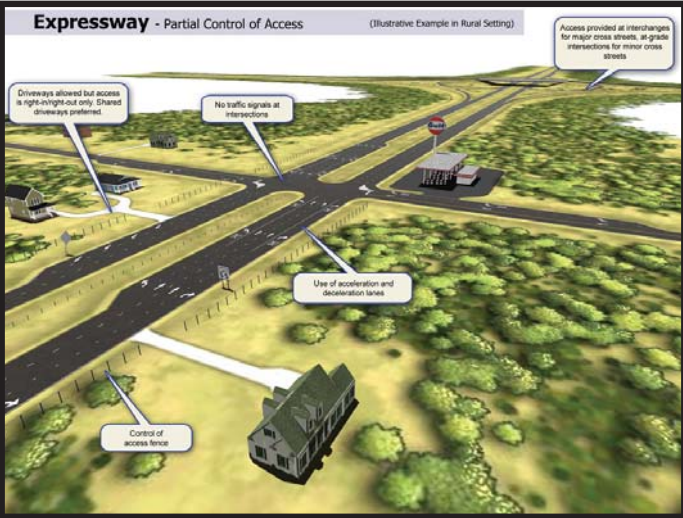
- Edge of Pavement
- Right-of-Way



TYPES OF HIGHWAY FACILITIES



Freeway



Expressway



Arterial

DISCLAIMER: These renderings are for illustrative purposes only. Actual placement of design elements may vary.

Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation (<http://www.ncdot.org/boh/preconstruct/hpb/3HC/facility/>)





FOCUSED WORKING GROUP (FWG)

LAND USE AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT

TOPICS

- Residential, commercial, and farm access
- Access issues (intersections, interchanges, driveways, crossings, safety, design, location)
- Access management
- Farmland impacts
- Future business development and land use
- Travel patterns
- East west roadway improvements

EXPECTATIONS

- Advisory group to the Project Study Group (PSG)
- Provide input and suggestions on the topics
- Input is used to help shape the final outcome of the project
- Meet between three to six times over a nine month period



FOCUSED WORKING GROUP (FWG)

SUSTAINABILITY

“Sustainability is the act of balancing the environmental, social and economic needs of the built and natural environments for present and future generations.”

TOPICS

- Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Environmental features (e.g., wetlands, streams, ecology)
- Aesthetics and landscaping
- Energy use (e.g. lighting)
- Construction practices
- Future land use plan compatibility

EXPECTATIONS

- Advisory group to the Project Study Group (PSG)
- Provide input and suggestions on the topics
- Input is used to help shape the final outcome of the project
- Meet between three to six times over a nine month period



FOCUSED WORKING GROUP (FWG)

ALTERNATIVE MODES

TOPICS

- Transit routes and stops
- Bicycle routes
- Pedestrian routes
- Connectivity to existing and proposed trail system
- Parallel multi-use pathways
- Crossings over or under ESH
- Integration with ESH
- Safety
- Other considerations to encourage use of alternative modes

EXPECTATIONS

- Advisory group to the Project Study Group (PSG)
- Provide input and suggestions on the topics
- Input is used to help shape the final outcome of the project
- Meet between three to six times over a nine month period



JANUARY 11, 2012

EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Focus Working Group (FWG)

LAND USE AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The FWG is an advisory group with specific interests and knowledge. They are assembled to review planning and design materials relating to their interest area and advise the Project Study Group (PSG) at key milestones, before the information is finalized. The topics covered and expectations of the Land Use and Access Management FWG are described below.

If you wish to be a member of the Alternative Modes FWG, please notify the project team via email (ESH@clarkdietz.com) or telephone (217-373-8901) no later than January 25, 2012. The FWG member selection will occur in a fair and transparent manner. Participation may be limited depending on amount of interest shown.

TOPICS

- Residential, commercial, and farm access
- Access issues (intersections, interchanges, driveways, crossings, safety, design, location)
- Access management
- Farmland impacts
- Future business development and land use
- Travel patterns
- East west roadway improvements

REFERENCES

The following list includes, but is not limited to, documents and guidelines that may be used as references.

- USDA/NRCS Farmland Act
- Illinois Agricultural Areas Conservation and Protection Act of 1979
- IDOT Bureau of Design & Environment Manual
- McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan
- County and municipal zoning and plans
- Other planning guidelines

EXPECTATIONS

- Advisory group to the PSG
- Provide input and suggestions on the topics
- Input is used to help shape the final outcome of the project
- Meet between three to six times over a nine month period



JANUARY 11, 2012

EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Focus Working Group (FWG)

SUSTAINABILITY

The FWG is an advisory group with specific interests and knowledge. They are assembled to review planning and design materials relating to their interest area and advise the Project Study Group (PSG) at key milestones, before the information is finalized. The topics covered and expectations of the Sustainability FWG are described below.

If you wish to be a member of the Alternative Modes FWG, please notify the project team via email (ESH@clarkdietz.com) or telephone (217-373-8901) no later than January 25, 2012. The FWG member selection will occur in a fair and transparent manner. Participation may be limited depending on amount of interest shown.

“Sustainability is the act of balancing the environmental, social and economic needs of the built and natural environments for present and future generations.”

TOPICS

- Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Environmental features (e.g., wetlands, streams, ecology)
- Aesthetics and landscaping
- Energy use (e.g. lighting)
- Construction practices
- Future land use plan compatibility

REFERENCES

The following list includes, but is not limited to, documents and guidelines that may be used as references.

- Clean Water Act
- Wetland Policy Act of 1989
- Endangered Species Act
- IDOT Bureau of Design & Environment Manual
- IDOT Illinois Livable and Sustainable Transportation Rating System and Guide Manual
- FHWA Transportation & Sustainability Guidebook
- BMP guidance documents
- McLean County land use and comprehensive planning documents

EXPECTATIONS

- Advisory group to the PSG
- Provide input and suggestions on the topics
- Input is used to help shape the final outcome of the project
- Meet between three to six times over a nine month period



Focus Working Group (FWG)

ALTERNATIVE MODES

The FWG is an advisory group with specific interests and knowledge. They are assembled to review planning and design materials relating to their interest area and advise the Project Study Group (PSG) at key milestones, before the information is finalized. The topics covered and expectations of the Alternative Modes FWG are described below.

If you wish to be a member of the Alternative Modes FWG, please notify the project team via email (ESH@clarkdietz.com) or telephone (217-373-8901) no later than January 25, 2012. The FWG member selection will occur in a fair and transparent manner. Participation may be limited depending on amount of interest shown.

TOPICS

- Transit routes and stops
- Bicycle routes
- Pedestrian routes
- Connectivity to existing and proposed trail system
- Parallel multi-use pathways
- Crossings over or under ESH
- Integration with ESH
- Safety
- Other considerations to encourage use of alternative modes

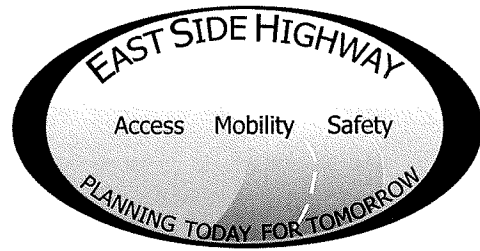
REFERENCES

The following list includes, but is not limited to, documents and guidelines that may be used as references.

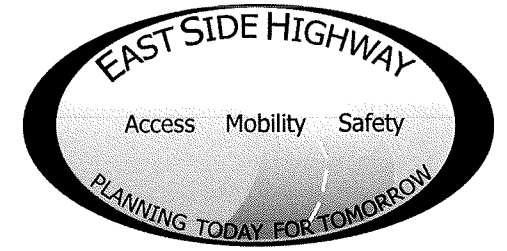
- IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment Manual
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
- FHWA Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program guidance
- Local planning documents

EXPECTATIONS

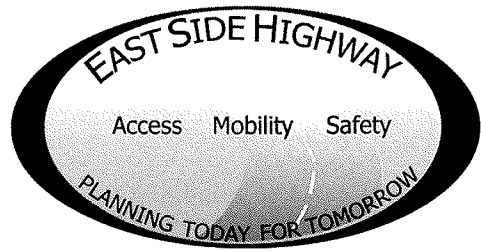
- Advisory group to the PSG
- Provide input and suggestions on the topics
- Input is used to help shape the final outcome of the project
- Meet between three to six times over a nine month period



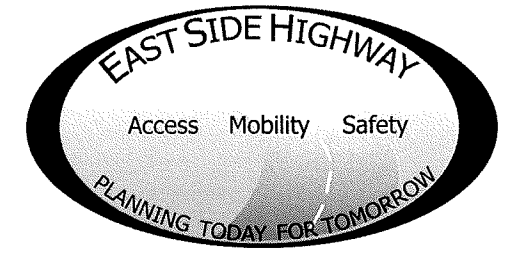
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Bill Agge	Local 362	605 Pine ST L+27 Normal IL		
Mike Feldner		1406 Guiness Dr Bloomington		
BELLE PERRY WOODY GUTHALS		5011 LONDONDERRY ROAD BLM,		
Glenn Bloch		801 Towanda Bernes Rd		
Juergen Schroeer	personal + J.P. Audubon	605 Normal Ave Normal IL 61761	309-452-8700	schroeerjm@hotmail.com
Mike James	Village of Downs	9 Harvey Rd Downs, IL 61736	309-850-7374	Mike.James@mchsi.com
Kent Schreff	USDA-NRCS	8441 Prairie (va) Bl./Bloomington IL 61705	309-378-5602	
Ron Hoftroner		Bl. 16951 Old Colonial Rd	309-662-4129	Ronh3333@Aol.com.
Bette Rackauskas	McLean County Board	308 Riley West Unit Bloomington, IL	663-5440	erackauskas@dotmail.com



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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Marilyn Marquis		811 Towanda Barnes Rd	728-2129	
Seth Kressig		18869 Terrace Valley Dr	664-0275	seth1218@mediacom66.net
Mickey Lang		102 Miriam Way, Towanda	532-3221	
Lee Mehn		2201 Riverwoods Ln	310-3379	
Steven Purcell	COB	407 W Emerson St	828-2220	SL Purcell @ Juno . Com
Jan & Ken Holder	Friends of Kickapoo Creek	P.O. Box 273 DOWNS, IL 61786	663-1840	Friedm Friends of Kickapoo Creek@gmail.com
Heath Hunziker		3913 RAVE RD Bloomington 61705	224-550-7593	
DEW FAIR		3915 Lay Ln Blm, IL		
Paul Dehner		3917 Brookline Ln		pdehner@yahoo.com
SCOTT HUTCHINS		2214 RIVERWOODS LN	309-531-5190	SCOTT LEE HUTCHINS@GMAIL.COM

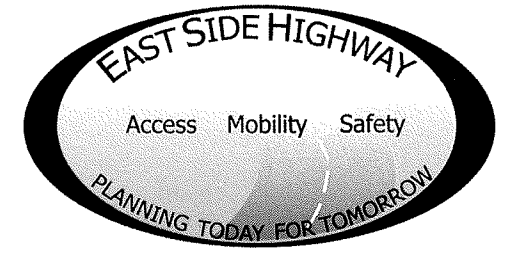


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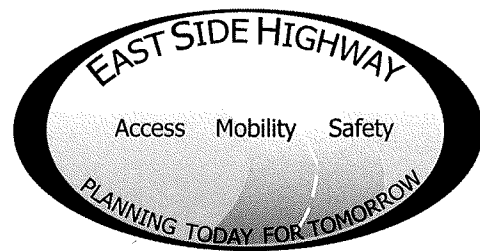
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Karla Andricks	Eagle View Estates Subdivision	2205 Riverwoods Lane Bloomington, IL	309-808-1235	andricks3@yahoo.com
JERRY GRANDON	EAGLE VIEW SOUTH	3910 BAYWOOD, RD BLM	217-412-1655	
Dave Resmussen		3211 Leafy Lane Bloomington IL 61704	309-663-2115	DLEED@Aol.com
Ron Brown		2218 S WOOD FIELDS Blm, IL	663-5418	
Jennifer Sicks	MCRPC	115 E. WASHINGTON ST. SUITE 4103 BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701	828-4331	
Brian Wabel	Bussey Ag Service	3002 W. Windsor Rd ^{Champaign IL} 61822	217-351-2744	brian.wabel@bussey.com
Cathy Johnson	THE GROVE	1506 Rathmore Rd	663-4038	deweyj@nwnc.net
Andrew Walter	Eagle View South	4003 Lay Lane	309-310-9419	
NORMAN HESTER		17396 E 2200 NORTH RD HUDSON IL 61745	309-726-1110	norm@nwhestercpa.com
Kevin Kothe		19149 Meander Way Bloomington IL 61705	309-663-8995	kothex4@yahoo.com

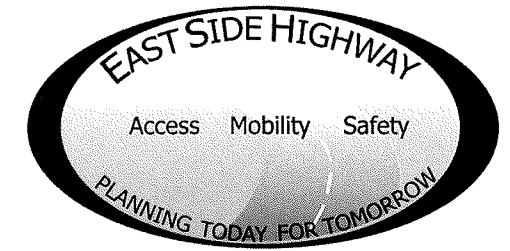


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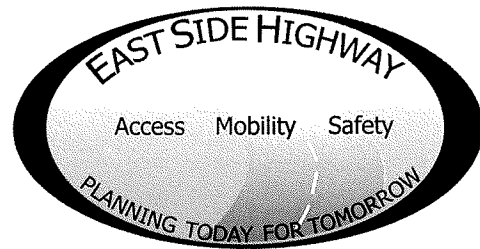
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Rob McDonnell	Grove Sub Division	1515 Kell Blm 61705	531-7672	rob.mcdonnell75@yahoo.com
DARLA LATRAM	IDOT	PARIS		
Kelli Socha		4010 Rockledge Rd Blm 61705		
George Gramm	Young America Realty	311 S Main St	(309) 454-2338	george@yarealty.com
Lisa Wise		4008 Fullerton Road	(309) 808-2742	twiseguy5@gmail.com
Connie Grandon		Baywood Rd - B1		
Michael Brown	Ecology Action Center	202 W College Ave, Normal, IL 61761	309-454-2169	mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org
Charlie Moore	Chamber of Commerce	210 S. East St. Brooming	829-6344 (309)	Charlie@micheanochamber.org
Jeff + Jan Pfleeger		9629 Wolf Hill Rd. Blm. 61705	378-2429	jpfleeger@frontier.com
KEN SOMMERS	THE GROVE	1506 RATHMORE RD BLMGM	663-4038	ken.sommers.ayok@statefarm.com

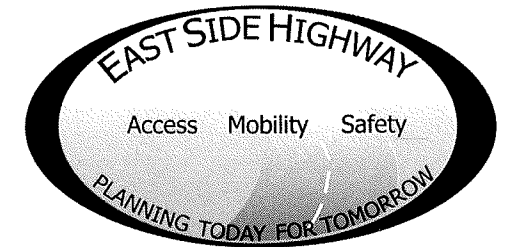


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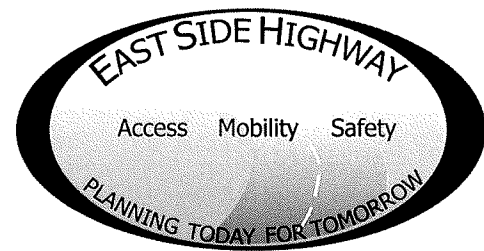
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
DeLisa Rodney		3906 Rockledge Rd. B 407, IL 61705	309- 662-6390	delisa-rodney@yahoo.com
Mike Hall		706 S Fell Ave, Normal	309-452-9067	mike.hall447@comcast.net
Drake Zimmerman	FRIENDS OF KICKAPOO CREEK	20722 Cheveys fave Rd Bloomington	309 454-7040	drakezim@gmail.com
Diane Quijano		5019 Londonderry Rd. Bloomington IL 61705	309-661-0173	Quijano5761@gmail.com
Kaivant and Vaasha Shah	Home Owners	5006, Fleming lane Bloomington, IL 61705	309-661-9240	VKSUS99@yahoo.com
Bruce Bray	State Sen	2203 Sault	309 664 4440	
Hanni Wilkhat	McLean Co Board	116 Eastview Dr. Normal	309 454 7640	lwolfe123@gmail.com
Philip Dick	McLean County	115 E. Washington	309-824-2551	philip.dick@mcleancounty.il.gov
Jessica Oester	homeowner	2209 Tyler Trail Bloomington IL 61705	812-320-8734	JessicaDOester@gmail.com
Dave Freese & Lisa Schiller	homeowner	2202 Tyler Trail Bloomington, IL 61705	309-310-5780	dave-freese-ub@yahoo.com

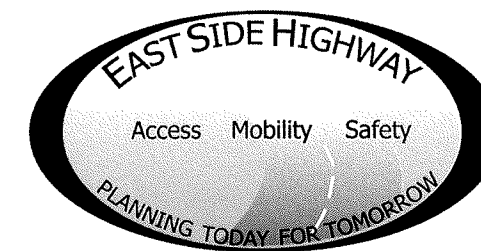


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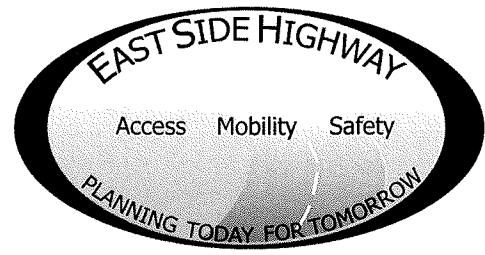
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Justin Large		5015 Longfield, Blm 61705	531-9630	justinlarge1974@gmail.com
Rebekah Holt		6 Brookline Ct Blm 61705	662-5243	deltaby3@aol.com deltaby3
Andria Merkle				
Bill Caisley	County Board	401 W. Summit, Normal 4526339		
MARK WOOLARD	CITY BLM.		434-2341	mwoolard@cityblm.org
Carl Olson	CIRA	3201 CIRA DRIVE, #206	662-7384	Carl@CIRA.com
Christine Brown		4002 Sutter Rd Bloomington	662-0295	bsbrown@comcast.net
Ronnie Jones	-	19114 Blinn Dr. Blm HUDSON IL 61748	310-2881	Ronnie.Jones17@yahoo.com
Jill BROWN		15958 E. 2550 NORTH RD	726-1378	
Dave Ashbrook		15895 Old Colonial Rd	875-3369	

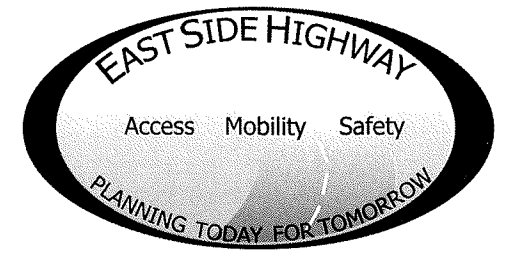


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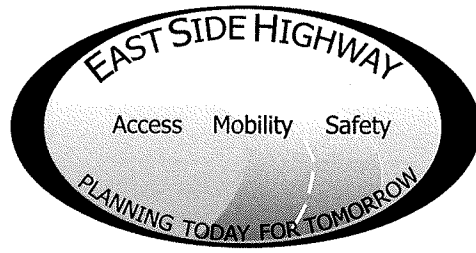
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Mike McCarter	Homeowner	1512 Kell Ave	309-212-0641	
Bill Brunner	FARM OWNER	7 SMITH LANE PONTIAC IL	815-844-7778	
Mel Brown	"	1014 Broadway Ave	309-451-5601	bogey45@gmail.com
Lily Carlock		5111 FLEMING LN.	309-662-6148	
Kurt Anderson	Homeowner	4011 ROCKLEAF RD	309-807-5657	KJ@KJHOME.COM
Tim Bittner	"	19580 E 1300 NORTH RD.	309 663-4279	tbittn@frontier.com
Carl Teichmann	IWU	P.O. Box 2400 Blm	309 556-3429	@teich@iuc.edu
Stan Cain	BLOOMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION		309-664-1904	
Yongmei Liu	Illinois Fla State Univ.	5102 Fleming Ln.	309.212.3482	yongmei_liu@yahoo.com
Bruce Neffziger	Homeowner	1510 Kell Ave. Blm	309 5320249	bneffzy@comcast.net

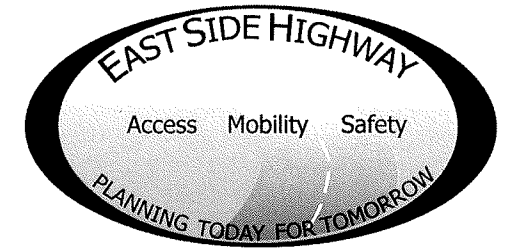


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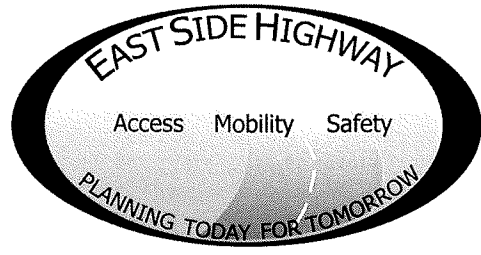
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Rod + Jeanne Merkle		1507 Kell Ave	309 585 2126	rjamerkle@msn.com
BRIAN JACOBS		3901 BROOKLINE LN.	309 585 2346	bkjacobs@dow.com.
BILL FRIEDRICH		16748 East 825 North Bloom.		
Kathy Zachria		2212 Revere Rd Bloom	309-808-0260	kzach7@gmail.com
Yvonne Barres		9 Deerfield Ct, Bloom	662-7615	GYBarres@yahoo.com
Rachel Maxwell		1511 Kell Ave Blm 61705	3	rachelmreimer@gmail.com
Joe Plattner		2302 Revere Rd - Blm 61705	664-6812	
Barb + Dick Jurgens		103 De Lane Ave, Towanda 61776	728-2194	rjbj72@frontiernet.net
Gene Brown	Town of Normal		549-574	gbrown@normal.org
MARIO MOREN	NICOR GAS	28512 N. 100 East 21st Streator, IL 61742	815-854-2950	mmorrel@ag/resources.com



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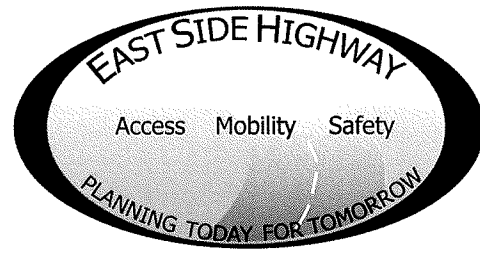
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Liz Dulany-Jones	Home Owner	19114 Briar Dr	309 310 2880	lizdulanyjones@yahoo.com
Fran Von Holten	Home Owner	2204 Revere Rd	309 662 1982	joefranvh@hotmail.com
MARY M. RAYCRAFT	FARM OWNER	18547 US 150 Hwy	(309)663-1900	
ELMO (GENE) BLAND	Home Owner	9634 STARLITE R	309 663 2500	LEGBB@YAHOO.COM
JEFF TRIMBLE	"	1307 RED ABBEY AVE	309 585 0509	
BILL HEVREN	"	2289 HOLBROOK DRIVE	309-454-7972	
Brian Bogner	"	505 Delane Ave Tampa	309-660-1169	
Drew Lawyer	"	1503 RACHMORE RD	309-808-0503	drew.lawyer@yahoo.com
Bill Wasson	Moham County	109 Diane Dr Lexington, FL	309-888-5110	bill.wasson@mohamcountyil.gov
Eric Penn	Liuna 362	1035 E Front	309-275-9372	

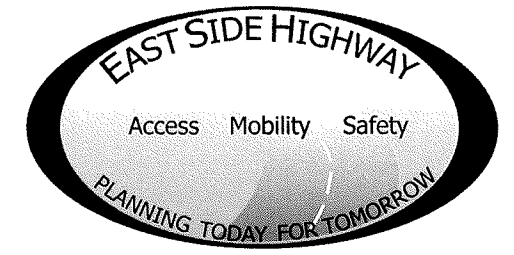


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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
DAVID SPEICHER	IDOT - 05	PO Box 610 Paris IL 61944	217/466-7252	David.speicher@illinois.gov
Craig Fisher	Homeowner	3906 Watertown Ln.	830-5472	packardfisher@frontier.com
Chris Shaw	Homeowner	2604 Addison Ln 61705	808-0499	SarahscyeAOL.com
Dusty Burton	Homeowner	22510 E 900 N Rd Decatur IL 61736	287-4411	dustylee52@hotmail.com
Susan Schafer	McLean Co. Board	1404 Steeplechase Dr. Blm. 61701	827-2372	Susan@schafer9.com
Guy DiCicilia	BNANBA	1404 GUINNESS DR.		
JAMES PEARSON	Planning Commission Bloomington	14 HEARTHSTONE CT. Blm 61704	530-3582	JPEAR764@AOL.com
Jason Crumrine	Home owner	2210 Revere Rd	531-0529	Jason.crumrine@gmail.com
SCOTT DOUGLAS	HOMEOWNER	1301 RED ABBEY AVE 61705	404-451-1533	SCOTTDUGLAS.RIA@GMAIL.COM
Prof Treadway	Resident	712 N. School St. Normal 61761	454-1328	Prof Treadway@ilstu.edu



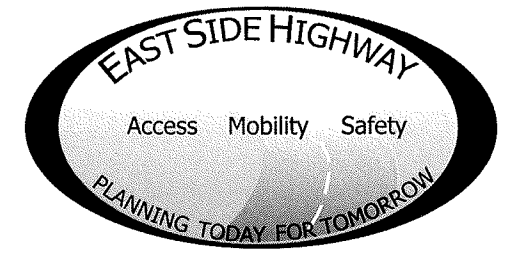
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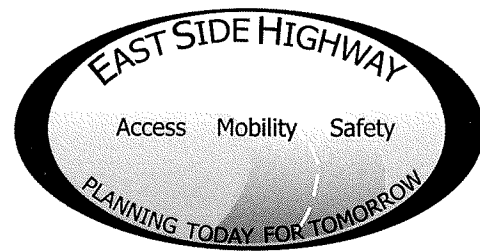
NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Barbara Dunsig	City Watch	Normal		
Rob Fazzoni	City BLM	5 Canterbury Court BLM	663 0476	Robert.Fazzoni@GMail.com
Cindy Blackburn		4018 Rockledge Rd BLM	663-1863	blackburn-cindy@yahoo.com
Kurt Rabesill		21021 E. 1300 N. Rd BLM 61705	663-4891	
Andrew Sylvester	City BLM	1 DRY SAGE CIR BLM 61705	309 706-0298	SlyDogSly4@aol.com
DORIS REESER		19066 WOODLAND TRAIL BLM 61705	309-662-5500	
Jill Savage		19545 E 1600N, Normal, IL 61761	309-661-2707	jill@jillsavage.org
MARK Savage		"	"	msavage7@yahoo.com
Randy Schaab	Normal ZBA	405 E Northtown Rd Normal		
KERRY COLE		4009 Rockledge	533-1365	Kerry.Lynne@comcast.net



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Larry Reeser		Hayworth, dl. 61745 16838 E 775 N. Rd.	309 829-6508	reeserfarms @ gmail . com
Frank Wieking		3205 Monmouth way Dr Blomington IL	309-662-1909	
Maurice & Dorothy Jones		18264 N 215 th East Rd Towanda, dl. 61776	309-728-2605	
Opni Frank Hany		102 W. 4 th St. Gridley IL 61744	309 242 8500	hanyjoni@yahoo.com
Julie Frank-Orellana		107 Prairie Ln Gridley IL 61744	309-319-4201	OrellanaJulie88@yahoo.com
George Wells		Same	Same	Same
Terry Lantz		3024 Belclare Rd	Same	highmart highfold2@comcast.net
Seth Whalen				
JIM FRUIN		3001 THORNWOOD	309 662-1197	JAFRUIN@COMCAST.NET
BOB BRADTNER		5308 LONGFIELD	452-9937	BOB.BRADTNER@COMCAST.NET

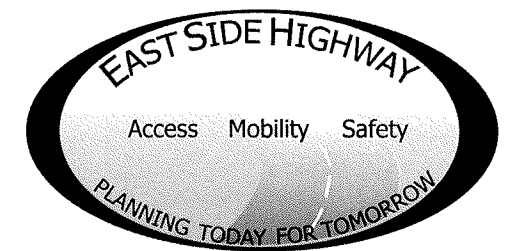


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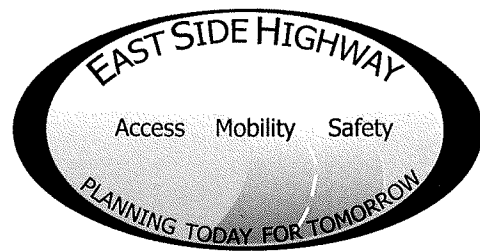
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
DAN Staver		1414 Gurney Drive	846-0214	STAVERC5@XATW.COM
Karen Hanson		4 Deerfield Ct, Bloomington ⁶¹⁷⁰⁵	808-1366	ckhanson4@comcast.net
Ryan Johnston		1401 Watersound Way, Bloomington ⁶¹⁷⁰⁵	535-9966	thejohnstonians@gmail.com
HARLAN FELS		2308 Revere Rd 61705	824-3539	HHFELS38@gmail.com
Ken Martin Dolan		24 Strabedges Ct Blm 61705	287-6421	Ken@trassdvl.com
Horace McFar		4012 Rockledge Road		
AMMY WALSH	senator Bill Brady	2203 Eastland Drive STE 3 Bloomington IL 61704	464-4440	abby@ senatorbillbrady.com
MATT Reynolds		5106 Londonderry Rd Bloomington, IL 61705	287-1536	MAT.reynolds75@gmail.com
Wilma Dieting		3204 Morrissey Bl. 61705	662-1708	
Bob Mitchell II		8802 North 1750 East Rd Bloomington, IL 61705	(309)532-4009	bob_mitchell_jr@yahoo.com

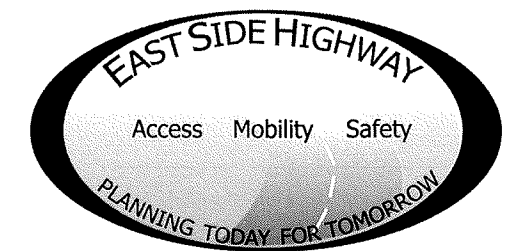


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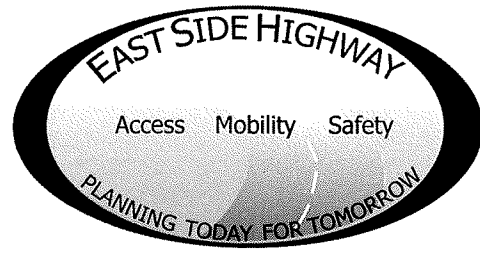
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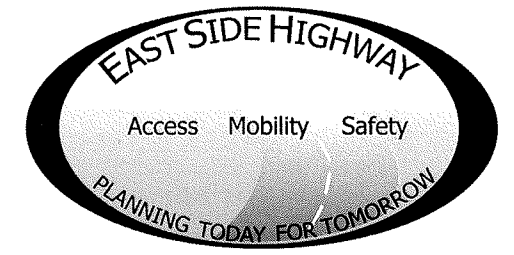
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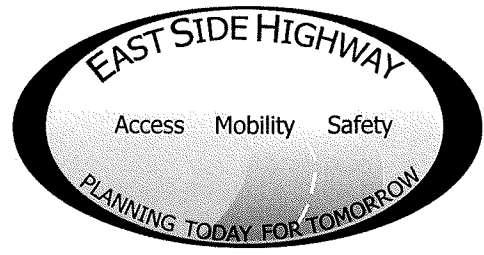
NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Scott + Tammy Dehm		25124 Pansmith Mem Hwy Hudson, IL 61748	309-825-2089	TammyDehm@gmail.com
Franzje Soep		711 S. Cottage Ave #128 Normal, IL 61761	309 452-5524	flsoep@ilstu.edu
APRIL KINZINGER	Cornerstone Christian Academy	22017 E. 1200 N. RD Blm 61705	309-662-9900	april.kinzingr@cornerstonechristian.com
Rusty DePew	Attorney	201 W. Olive Bloomington	309-829-7002	depewlaw@aol.com
Jim Dee		1105 N. Towanda Bloomington	309-662-1990	
Linda Willey		19774 Buffalo Tree Blm, IL 61705	532-2040	linwilley@msn.com
Art Penn	LIUNA	503 N. Oak Normal IL 61761	275-0744	tpblm.lubwers@frontier.com
Chuck Treanor		3911 Brookline Ln Bloomington, IL 61705	821-3541	Chuck.Treanor@ CountryFinancial.com
Chris Bellotti		8 Brookline Ct Bloomington, IL 61705	664-0578	
Larry Meyer		14 Eastwood Ct. Towanda, IL 61776	824-4350	



**EAST SIDE HIGHWAY
 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**
Public Information Meeting No. 4
January 11, 2012 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Rob Hale	Eagle View Estates	2212 Tyler Trail	309 533 4589	Robhale31@gmail.com
Sue Haag	Eagle View	4004 Rockledge Rd.	309 663-0393	chaag4004@comcast.net
Chris Haag	"	"	"	"
Brent Carlock	The Grove	1406 Stagehorne Way	309 532-4447	bkmjwc@gmail.com
Russ Bauer		3605 BAYWOOD, Bloom. Mo	509-663-1037	
Julie Stier		2275 North Bridge Dr. Normal	309-310-3010	kjstier@yahoo.com
Tom Kreigh	Eagle View	2202 Revere Rd	509-275-0659	KREIGHCREW@AOL.COM
Marie McCurdy		20523 E. 1500 N. Rd. Nml	309-310-6175	marie.mccurdy@mcleancountysil.gov
Ann Dickerson		502 E Virginia Nml		annedbpl@yahoo.com
Robin Weaver	Town of Normal	1304 Warriner St. Normal	309-454-9576	rweaver@normal.org



EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Public Information Meeting No. 4

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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
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Mary Calvert		Bloomington 1216 Eastport Dr Unit A 61704		
Kenn Calvert		1975 E 2100 North Rd Jowanda IL	(309) 831-6696	KUC1945@comcast.net
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Angelo Capparella	JWP Audubon Society	907 S. Fell, Normal		apcappara@ilstu.edu
RICK MRKALAC	HAWTHORNE II Group	21 LAVENDER LN	309 664 6475	MRKALAC@GMAIL.COM
CURT & CAROLYN KORNELKAMP		20355 N 1960 EAST R, Jowanda	309-728-2214	ILHUSKERFAN@FRONTIERNET.NET
Bryan Kennedy		3 Swayze Ct.		bryan_kennedy@alumni.purdue.edu
JASON SEIBLY		4006 Fullerton Rd, BLM	309	

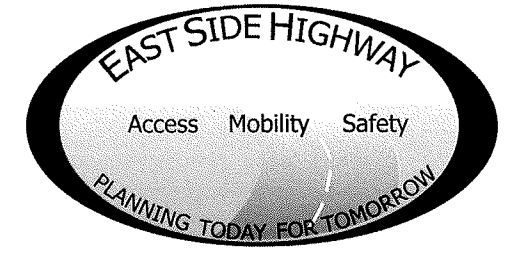


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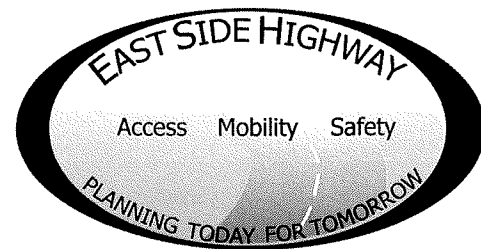
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Tim Landrus		5007 Longfield Rd Bloomington 61705	815-383-6669	timothylandrus@gmail.com
Bob Walsh		1107 Tawanda Barnes Road	309 208 1125	bob@dodson.ph.com
Jeff & Kristen Legner		5009 Fleming Ln	217-741-4271	KJLYONS21080@YAHOO.COM
Keith Eichensche	GROVE (HOA) Subdivision	6 Callahan Ct Bloomington	309-706-5679	GROVE KICKAPOO HOA@COMCAST.NET KEITHKIM814@COMCAST.NET
Dave King		1 Brookline Ct Bloomington	309 808 2171	DKING3@DTNSPEED.NET
Sally Pyne		216 Cambridge, N	309 451 8470	spyne@lincolncollege.edu
JOHN BISHOP		9932 OLD SAWMILL RD BLM 61705	309-662-3164	LLAMSBISHOP@MSN.COM
Melissa miles		1501 Kell Ave. BLM 61705	309-531-1917	melmiles5@hotmail.com
David Wyse		2203 Riverwoods Lane	309 310 7586	drdavid@chrismandental.com
Peggy miles		2212 Riverwoods Ln	309-826-5591	peggy@dalestrain.net

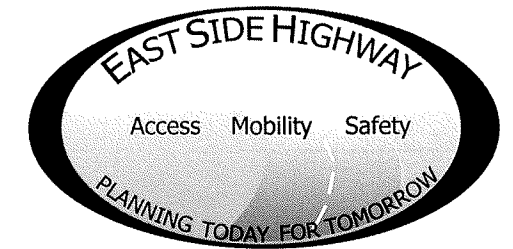


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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Robert B. Mitchell		8802 N MISOER Rd Bloomington IL 61705	309 825-0530	
Tom Haynes	Friends of Kickapoo Creek	P.O. Box 324 Heyworth, IL 61745	309 824 9611	eslayne@ilstu.edu
Sherry + Steve Shipley	Lamp Lighter	111 Olive St Dowanda ⁶¹⁷⁷⁴	309-728-2849	sshopley@frontiernet.net
Jason Witte		20300 Murray Hill Rd Bloomington	309 378 4284	
Aaron Lock	Eagle View	2406 Riverwoods Ln. Blm IL 61709	309-287-6612	aaronlock68@yahoo.com
Jon Eickhorst	Eagle View	10 Flint Ct 61705	309-826 2990	
Brian Gebhart	Eagle View	3907 Waterfountain Lane	309-808-1764	bwgebhart@gmail.com
Mylene Gregor	Friends of Kickapoo	107 W. Market Palm 61701	309-828-8838	
Mike & Erica Roehm	The Grove	5001 Londonderry Rd Blm IL 61705	309-877-1089	roehm2009@yahoo.com
Don Adams	Friendsworth Group	2709 McGraw, Bloomington	663-8435	dadams@f-w.com

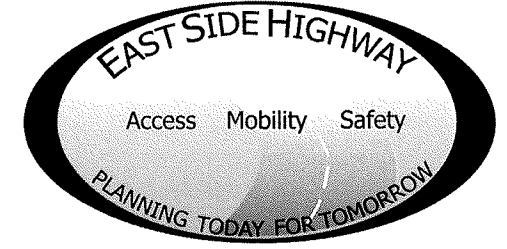


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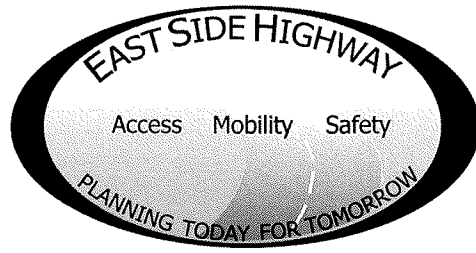
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Steve & Jan Westfall		1-kypw 7779 Alexander Rd		
TERRY GIANNONI	MONEY CREEK TWP.	P.O. Box 137, Lexington, IL 61753	309 830-1653	TERRYJDEB@AOL.COM
Robbie Burmaster		8802 N 1750E RD	309-660-2990	Burmasterro@yahoo.com
Arnie & George Tullier		1406 Watersound Way	309-585-2244	altullier@aol.com
Erni & Scott Jenkins		4011 Fullerton Rd	309-838-2087	ScottJact2000@yahoo.com
GARY & HOLLY GARLAND		2301 RIVER WOODS LN. BLM, IL 61705	702-204-6758	GGARLAND69@GMAIL.COM
Jim Karch	Bloomington	115 E. Washington St Bloomington, IL 61701	309-434-2225	jkarch@cityblm.org
Marcin Kock	Towanda	102 N Madison Towanda IL 61796	309-728-8874	mishka17@frontiernet.net
Deb Engelmeier		1505 Kell Ave Bloomington 61705	309 838 7336	engel dke @ comcast.net
Janas Burton		22510 E. 900 North Rd. Downer 61736	309-287-1055	janasburton@mac.com

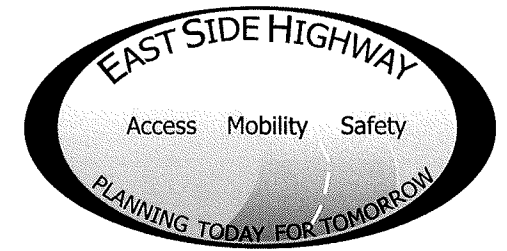


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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Dale Strain		2212 Riverwoods Ln Blm 61705	309-826-5592	dale@dalestrain.net
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Bob Wojasinski		4003 Rockledge Rd	309-807-4055	BWOJASINSKI@GMAIL.COM
Ryan Misch		5104 Fleming Lane	309-242-6273	ryanmisch@gmail.com
BRIAN MATHIAS		1309 RED ABBEY AVE, Bloomington	309-533-2241	BRIAN.MATHIAS@GMAIL.COM
Janette M. Otis		Towanda		
Mark Drane		1106 W. Wood Blm		markdrane@msn
Alan Reeser		19066 Woodland Trail	309-662-5500	gustavosreese@hotmail.com
MIKE MATEJKA		112 1/2 WEEDON BLM	827-3934	Matejka53@aol.com
Bob Williams		2204 Clearwater Blm	350-9621	

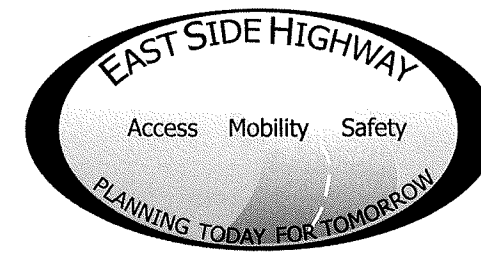


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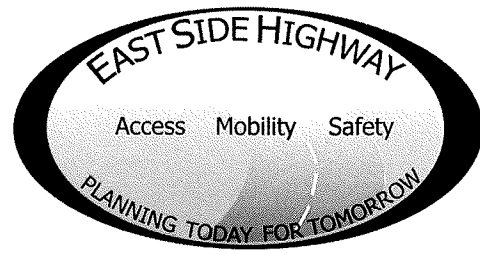
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
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Joshua Criss		3910 Brookline Ln Bloom. 61705	309-662-9314	
Travis Gorden		3902 Rockledge Rd, Bloomington IL		

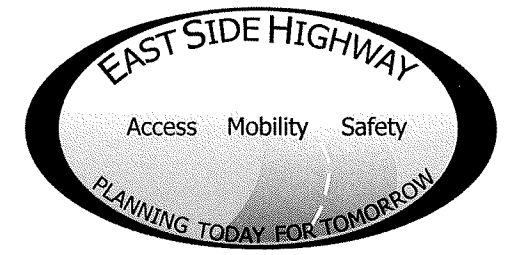


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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
JAMES M. WILLIAMS	Eagle View South	2202 Riverwoods Ln BHM, IL 61705	309.662.7121	
Curt Simonson	Tri-Valley USD #5	410 E. WASHINGTON Downs	309-378-2351	
David Hales	City of Bloomington	5 Conway	309-454-2270	
Paul Russell	MCRPC		309-828-4771	



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

To whom it may concern,

I have several concerns regarding the development of an East Side Highway at the locations currently proposed:

- The current alternatives are very near east side neighborhoods. Considering the extremely close proximity, an interstate-type highway will increase child safety concerns, crime potential, noise pollution, and decrease property values for the neighborhoods in Towanda, Eagle View, and The Grove. Homes could be as close as ~350 feet from the new highway.*
- The population and traffic growth estimates seem aggressive considering the current growth plans for businesses in Bloomington-Normal. Even if growth met estimates, wouldn't a non-Interstate type road (i.e. another Towanda Barnes) alleviate traffic congestion and provide for both residential and commercial friendly development? An Interstate would choke future residential growth to the east.*
- The Bloomington-Normal road system currently has major north/south routes spaced every 1.75-2.50 miles apart (I-55/74, Main Street, Veterans Parkway, Towanda Barnes Road). It seems that this pattern has worked well for the city. That would imply that the next north/south route should be 1.75-2.50 miles east of Towanda Barnes Road, much further than the current alternatives.*
- The decline in property values of several neighborhoods due to an interstate highway could harm property tax revenues that contribute to school budgets and road maintenance.*
- Some would use an east side interstate to bypass B-N rather than using the west side route of 55/74 to travel from the Towanda area to the Downs area. By my estimates, an east side interstate would only shave ~7 miles off the west side route. This equate to about 6 minutes of saved travel time. Is a project of this mammoth size a responsible use of federal, state, or local tax money with such minimal benefit?*

- *The budgets of all levels of government will likely be strained for years, if not decades to come. This type of project is not the best use of government spending.*

When my family chose to build a new house in the Eagle View neighborhood, we were looking for a quiet, child friendly, safe neighborhood to build our "dream" house that we could raise our children in. Now that we have a young child, our increased need for the neighborhood to remain safe and family friendly is a top concern. We love living in this neighborhood as it is close to work, daycare, parks, etc. I would have never imagined us building our home here if we knew there was the potential for an interstate running through our backyard. I am not in favor of the current proposed alternatives nor the type of road proposed. Thank you for your time.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The

proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

My name is [REDACTED] My grandfather was Harold D. Bozarth. I am writing to state my opposition to the current proposed East Side Bypass Plan. Our property is situated at the southwest corner of the bypass, north of I-74 and on the east side of County Road 1750 East. If the southwest bypass is built, it would take our west side 50 acres and landlock our access to the family homestead. As proposed, it would run north and east along the edge of the family farmhouse, buildings and 2nd house and possibly take out 2nd house entirely. This farm has been in the Bozarth family well over 100 years and has recently been acknowledged as an Illinois Centennial Farm. I have in my possession the original United States Land Grant documents signed by President Polk dated in the 1840s.

The homestead sits on approximately 12 acres. The family house was built sometime in the 1860's or 70's by Mr. John Coleman who had married my grandfather's aunt, Emma Bozarth. The house has been maintained very well and would be considered in very good condition. The only changes in the home have been to update for modern conveniences such as the kitchen and a bathroom. In my opinion, this house is one of the best preserved historical farm homes in Mclean County. Approximately 200 trees surround the home site. A few trees are approximately 150 years old and many are at least 100 plus years old. In addition, there are two steel buildings, two detached garages, three grain bins, and lastly, a barn that was built in the 1860's still in usable condition.

In the mid 1960's the State of Illinois split the Bozarth farm, constructing I-74. When this happened, the construction of I-74 removed the south access lane to the farm. The State then built a lane on the north side from County Road 1750 East, which runs east along the railroad tracks to the homestead. This lane is a mile long and is the only access to the farm. The proposed bypass plan would take out this lane and leave no access to the Bozarth farm. I invite anyone that is interested to visit our farm to see the negative impact that the current proposed bypass plan will have on our family's Centennial Farm.

Response:

Impacts to existing agriculture were an important consideration in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. As corridors were developed with the Community Working Group (CWG), alternatives were created that paralleled existing roads or tract lines to the greatest extent possible taking into account avoidance of other features. Minimizing impacts included effects on the splitting of farm parcels in addition to access to the remaining parcels. Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm implement issues. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access. It is important to note, however, that slow moving farm vehicles would be prohibited from accessing the ESH due to safety reasons.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The project team understands the emotional ties that people have to their homes, especially if those homes have been in the family for multiple generations. Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

The resources analyzed in the Alignment Evaluation phase included forested areas. There are some trees impacted by the remaining alignments, however, there are no heavily forested areas impacted; heavily forested areas (such as areas north of Downs and forested strips along streams) were avoided as much as possible when alternatives were aligned. Trees were not found to be a differentiating criterion in the alignment selection process. Both IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have policies on landscaping for proposed projects that include replacing trees that are lost as part of the roadway construction. Additionally, a second Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction. It would be applicable to discuss tree impacts, mitigation, or landscaping in these group meetings.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
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April 5, 2012

Dear [REDACTED]

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I understand that the best available growth estimates indicate that this new highway will be needed to avoid over congestion of our existing roadways. However, I feel strongly that the alternatives, which include putting significant resources into improving and promoting our public transportation system, bike lanes, and building a more walkable community, have all been greatly overlooked.

These and other alternatives would likely be much more cost effective, reduce energy consumption and pollution, improve the health and fitness of our residents, and provide for an overall healthier, more pleasant, and sustainable living environment in Bloomington-Normal.

Our community is on it's way to becoming a model for sustainability in Illinois; to not take reasonable steps to follow suit with exploring more sustainable alternatives to building yet another highway would be to ignore the interests and values of a significant part of the population.

That being said, if this highway is decided to be necessary for the greater good, then given the environmental costs of any of the possible corridors, I strongly urge you to select the corridor option that best minimizes the loss of Kickapoo Creek wetlands, the loss of farmland, and sprawl development.

Response:

A stand-alone Transit Alternative was evaluated for its effectiveness to meet the Purpose and Need Statement of the project. Several modes of bus transit and light rail (including streetcar/trolley) were considered. The Bloomington-Normal urbanized area year 2035 population and employment densities were reviewed in evaluating the appropriate transit mode to serve the area. Given the population density thresholds, Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services would likely be the best fit for the project study area. Premium transit modes such as Light Rail Transit are not recommended because the projected population density will not support them.

Given that the system wide ridership for all of Bloomington-Normal is less than 5,000 trips per day with 11 fixed routes, the implementation of Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services as a stand-alone alternative would not meet the unmet demand of over 50,000 trips per day within the study area. Unmet demand is defined as the amount of volume reduction required on the failing road in relation to the capacity of the road. However, transit may provide merits as a supplement to the ESH improvements being considered for the project and will be further evaluated as alignments are refined and design progresses. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including transit) can be maximized through the development of an ESH.

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Assessment cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Don't waste money on building a road that will not have a use with the Peaking of Oil all transportation will dwindle.

Response:

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

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Sincerely,

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April 5, 2012



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First and foremost, I am extremely opposed to this plan. I do not see the need for an additional highway at all. I travel on Towanda Barnes frequently and it is far from nearing congestion. The economy is in a slump. I do not foresee the growth that is occurring on the east side to be significant enough to warrant such a costly endeavor. I think it is ridiculous to spend all of this time and money on such a project!

Initially this plan included a connection from 74 to 51. Where does that portion of the plan stand now? Is that still a part of the plan - or a part of a future plan? If so, where is the map that shows that additional information?

Response:

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The previously performed Corridor Study, which was completed in 2009, included one east-west alignment (referred to as EW8 in that study) that connected between South Main Street (US 51) and I-74 along the alignment of existing County Highway 36 (700N). That option only connected with a north-south alignment along 2150E. Neither option was included in the recommended alignment of the 2009 Corridor Study. This Environmental Assessment does not include any alignment options with a similar east-west connection between South Main Street (US 51) and I-74 because it is not believed they will be warranted by the target year of 2035. Additionally, the 2035 Land Use Plan identifies most of the area south of I-74 and east of US 51 to remain agricultural.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



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I am against ANY new east side highway.

If any highway were to be built, it should have been built BEFOREHAND. Not after development, schools and parks have been established. Not after people have collectively spent millions buying real estate. The proposed highway will decimate the values of the houses in the Eagle View, Harvest Pointe and Grove subdivisions. It will also kill the feeling of safety, serenity and being away from noise.

Hence I am opposed to any east side highway, where development has already occurred. If you MUST build an eastside highway, consider building it on County Road 2300 East, where there is no development now and people will be warned in advance of pending highway in another 25 years.

Thank you.

Response:

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the

improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

A detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 5, 2012



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I am not in favor of the highway. A definite need hasn't been determined.

Response:

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

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Please do not follow through with the construction. I believe there are much more important things to spend tax payers dollars on and I believe it is a waste to build another highway. People can commute just fine and I think more work should be done on the Rt. 66 bike trail. Let's promote biking not driving.

Response:

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

The network of existing and proposed bicycle routes was reviewed as part of the Alignment Analysis to determine the proximity of the routes to the proposed alternative alignments. Alignments further from the network will have reduced opportunities for multimodal use. A representative of the local bicycling community is a member of the Community Working Group (CWG) which serves an advisory role to the project study group. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including bikes) can be maximized through the development of an ESH. Through this FWG, bike and pedestrian paths will continue to be evaluated in conjunction with the ESH as the project continues.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S. Schmitt". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



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As a homeowner who just bought at house at the Grove, every day we pass the farms on Ireland Grove Road and my children love to look at the animals. Putting a highway in this area, will not only effect the farms and the new subdivision, but it will also affect my children having the joy each day of seeing farmland and animals instead of roads and cars. With Towanda Barnes being directly located next to the new highway being proposed, it does not make sense to me why we need another road that will do the same thing as Towanda Barnes. Most people know that you can get off in Towanda, take Towanda Barnes and then get on the highway. There is no need to destroy good farm land, which is rare these days for a road that has no purpose. We already have a road that will do what you are proposing. If this road is put in place, your future family members will lose the simple joy of seeing a smile on a kids face when they drive by and see cows on their way home. Farmland will be destroyed and someday when your future family needs food, I hope they will realize that you were the one that took that away from them. You need to consider what you are going to do to the future of this country instead of building a road that is not needed!!

Response:

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be

refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I am sorry, I just do not see the need to have this highway. In addition, it is way too close to the Towanda-Barnes road. Also, what good would it do the cities if it is a limited access highway - just a bad idea. The State of Illinois does not have the money, nor do we.

Response:

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Dear Planners,

I have a young family that recently moved to the Grove. I understand and respect the need to explore this highway, but kindly ask you do not build directly behind Kell in The Grove. This location would be unusually close to our residence and almost seems impossible to imagine this project would take place so close to our road. Our house was very expensive and has lost significant value, building this highway would eradicate additional property value and put my family in a bad financial position. This highway so close would also increase possible crime, pollution and noise in our area. I also worry about the safety concerns in conjunction with the elementary school as police have told me response time is poor to our neighborhood due to logistics. If this highway must be built so be it, but I kindly ask you to consider a location that is further away from our home as the failure to do so would have a severely negative impact on our lives.

Response:

While in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than several of the other eliminated alignments, the remaining alignments have passed four levels of increasingly detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. They contain no unrealistic or non-feasible alternatives.
2. They are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project; these alignments were found to best provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will help to accommodate projected traffic increases from the development.
3. They have fewer "direct" impacts on existing homes (i.e., acquisitions) and fewer acres of farmland removed from production than alignments which were eliminated.
4. They have fewer impacts to primary agricultural land, are less likely to encourage development inconsistent with the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, do not cross the main branch of the Kickapoo Creek, and are closer to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes than alignments which were eliminated.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH addresses the need to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and the need to improve both local and regional mobility and access. Alignments were evaluated to determine their efficiency at moving traffic between major travel nodes, including St. Joseph Hospital. The alignment's ability to move traffic is directly proportional to its ability to move emergency vehicles. All alternatives provided travel time savings compared to the No Build Alternative. Representatives from the EMS and police department are members of the Community Working Group (CWG) which serves an advisory role to the Project Study Group. Additionally, a Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to identify issues related to emergency vehicles.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

We are new residents to The Grove Subdivision and have serious concerns with placing a highway so close. A few, although not all-inclusive, are resale, property value, safety for our young children, traffic, noise, etc.

Unfortunately we are unable to make it to the public meeting, but wanted our concerns to be known.

Thank you.

Response:

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

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To my great dismay, the East Side Highway is still under consideration. The McLean County Regional Plan Update Committee itself noted that "the conventional auto-dependent growth model cannot be sustained over the long term" (see the preface to the 2009 McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan). Why the very idea of building a new highway--let alone a freeway--still exists is beyond me.

Predictions of growth necessitating a new East Side highway are based on past growth. The future will not be the same as the past. A "perfect storm" of peak oil, climate change, and economic constriction is already gathering force. As oil supplies diminish and gas prices skyrocket, people will be less and less attracted to living far from their workplaces. Not too far in the future, our suburban lifestyle will no longer be viable.

McLean County needs to prepare for what actually IS coming. Use energy and funds to develop centralized transportation such as busses or trolleys, and prepare now to get cars off the roads. Table the outmoded idea of an East Side highway once and for all. Our current roads (sewers, parks, etc) desperately need repair and upgrading. Fix these things, and spend no more staff time on the East Side fiasco.

Response:

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean

County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

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I do not want my name or contact information for public view.

I am a resident in the Grove Subdivision and I am against building the East Side Highway so close to our subdivision. I bought a home in a subdivision in the country for peace and quiet and do not want a highway built so close to my home. I do not want the noise or increased traffic in this area. Also, given the current real estate environment, our property values have already decreased over the past two years and this highway will ensure the downward trend continues. Please look at other options for this highway. I would be happy to answer any questions you have.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

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McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

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April 6, 2012



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My concern is that you minimize the loss of Kickapoo Creek wetlands, the loss of farmland, and sprawl development. (It appears that the CR2100E alternative would cause significantly more loss of Kickapoo Creek wetlands.) I urge you to take environmental preservation into highest consideration. Thank you. development than the other two alternatives.

Response:

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Assessment cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The alternatives that utilized CR 2100 E were eliminated during the Alignment Analysis, in part due to impacts to farmland and Kickapoo Creek, and inconsistencies with The McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



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I live in Tanglewood. What does "Grade Separation" mean relative to Cheney's Grove road? Does it mean an overpass/underpass for Cheney's Grove road or will the road be cut by the freeway as CR 2000 E was cut by I74.

Thank you

Response:

The term "Grade Separation" refers to two transportation facilities (i.e. roadways, railroads) crossing each other and one is elevated over the other. There is no connection between the facilities. They each operate independently of the other, and their individual continuity is preserved. Generally, for grade separations the minor road crosses over the major road since the minor road typically has fewer lanes. This results in a less costly bridge. In the context of this project, at this time it is anticipated there will be grade separations at the following lesser crossroads: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Oakland Avenue (1300N), and General Electric Road (1500N), and Old Route 66. There would also be grade separations of the ESH with the Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern railroads, and potentially at any abandoned railroads

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I believe I am in the majority in stating that I feel the East Side BYPASS is a terrible idea in its current iteration. I've yet to meet one person in support of this, other than the people being paid to study it. Our government is broke, and we are looking at more ways to spend money in an effort to get travelers to bypass our town? Those people who will gain easier access to the Interstate to the East do not want this. No need to mention the property value this plan aims to destroy in the neighborhoods near the proposed site..... No planners seem to care about that.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased

accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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The east-side highway proposal as presented January 11, 2012 should not be considered as an option to alleviate traffic concerns for future growth on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The proposal indicates that interstate standards will be the most efficient design for the project. With limited access due to ramp configurations this will actually limit access on either side of the roadway. One only has to look at the I55-I74 interstate on the west side of the community to realize that mobility when traveling east or west will be impacted. With the completion of 6 lanes on the current I55-I74 interstate it does not make any sense to add a by-pass to the east side of the community.

The other issue that will be a problem for the proposed area will be the diagonal cuts through farmland that will limit access for farmers to access fields during the farming season, as well as making new north-south cuts through fields and dividing that land. This will add to their costs of farming the land and also the potential of large farm machinery being moved on roads that are designed for vehicle traffic during the farming season.

The other issue will be the added noise pollution that will increase on the east-side because of large truck traffic that will use this road to keep from going around the west-side of the community. More commercial development will also accrue at the interchanges which will also add to environmental issues and noise pollution.

This proposal will not help with congestion on Veterans Parkway because of the proximity of the road and because businesses or employers currently on Veterans would not be relocating just because of a new interstate being built. It will however decrease property values in the corridor area, impact current subdivisions that people have moved into because of quality of life choices and potentially keep people from being able to sale or develop their property because this may be built.

The option should be upgrading existing right-of-ways to connect 155 and 174 if necessary and the improvement of east west roads to improve mobility. I am in favor of the no build option. I believe this would be better for the community.

Response:

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The design criteria used for overpasses or underpasses at crossroads will make allowances for the height and width of farm implements. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm implement issues. It is important to note, however, that slow moving farm vehicles would be prohibited from accessing the ESH due to safety reasons.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The year 2035 travel demand modeling performed to date does show some improvement of Veterans Parkway traffic volumes when comparing the 2035 No-Build alternative to the ESH alternatives. However, it is important to note that the Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. Improving congestion on Veterans Parkway, while being a potential benefit of an ESH, is not a primary objective of the study.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

Several alternatives that utilize a portion of existing roads, including Towanda Barnes Road, CR 2000 E and CR 2100 E, were evaluated and included in the alternative analysis evaluation. Alternatives that utilize Towanda Barnes Road and CR 2100 E were eliminated during the alternative analysis process due to disproportionately high environmental and/or community impacts.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE

McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



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I wish to withhold my name and information. How is it that this East Side Highway will benefit Bloomington/Normal when the highway will route traffic away from the businesses on both the west side and along Veteran's Parkway?

Also, how is it that we can afford this? We already have a connection from I-55 to I-74. Perhaps we should focus our tax dollars on more important things.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
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The corridor of choice must be one that minimizes loss of Kickapoo Creek wetlands, minimizes loss of farmland, and keeps sprawl developments to a minimum.

Response:

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Assessment cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
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About the east side bypass, I have a question: Why? There's already a bypass called Towanda-Barnes Road. Allow for further expansion to the east? Hardly, since the (proposed limited access) bypass would completely sever any future development to the east of it. Provide access to businesses? Again, there's already T-B Road, which provides excellent access, is easy to use (I travel on it twice a day at its "rush hour" with no difficulty whatsoever) and, most importantly, is already there! Give east side access to Chicago via I-55? That's called I-74 to I-57. Give east side access to I-74? Broken record, but that's called T-B Road. Finally, if an unnecessary bypass must be built, it should truly meet the arguments being given for one (expansion, access, etc.) by building it from Lexington to Leroy – that would be a real bypass, not just Veterans Parkway 2.0. (And this doesn't even begin to address where the money will come from, the environmental impact, and the destruction of farmland, homes, and lives that are the inevitable byproducts of this bypass.) PLEASE do not proceed with this! And stop spending money on plans to justify the unjustifiable!

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

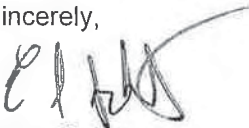
The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



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I live on Francesco Lane. I have invested a lot in my home. We chose this location to build primarily for its country feel. I have to believe that a highway in my backyard is not a good thing. Presently, The Grove subdivision is a growing community. It saddens me to think that environmental studies for where you would place a highway would not give utmost concern for the children, especially that live on Kell. Air and noise pollution will certainly result in placing traffic in our backyards. Do not go through with the proposed sight between Kell and Towanda Barnes!

Response:

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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I was unable to attend the PIM #4 that was recently held. But I would like to express my concerns over the 2 locations that are still being considered. I live in the Grove at Kickapoo Creek subdivision. Currently that subdivision is amazing with a tight knit group of residents. The property values are high even in a down economy and homes are selling in under a month -- with many selling in less than a week. If this highway happens, our property values will drastically drop and the entire climate of the subdivision will change. You are forcing us to lose the investments we have all made in these beautiful homes and area. Not to mention the stress that will be put on us to get to and from our homes during constructions.

I don't understand why Towanda Barnes cannot just be expanded and new cut throughs made as far as where we want it to join up with Veterans. I believe Blm/Normal is growing and needs better traffic routing. But I don't believe this is the best or only option. On behalf of myself and all of my neighbors I strongly oppose either of the remaining routes for the East Side Highway.

Also I don't see how you can ever decide there it will have 'no impact' -- it is definitely going to IMPACT each and every one of my neighbors. Not to mention the new schools that city put so much money in to build. Thank you -

Response:

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased

accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Access during construction to properties within or contiguous to the project alignment is something that is addressed in the Phase II design stage of an improvement (after the Environmental Assessment is completed). It is the policy of all of the transportation agencies (local, state, and federal) involved in this study to maintain access to all commercial properties (including schools) during construction. If this project is built, the assigned construction engineer will work with all affected properties to ease the inconveniences necessitated by construction.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, visual impacts, and changes in air quality.

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McLean County Engineer



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To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in opposition of the proposed East Side Highway. I have been a resident of the Eagle View subdivision for four years. My husband and I chose this neighborhood, as new residents to the Bloomington-Normal area, over many others because we liked the quiet location with relatively little traffic coming by our home. We have two small children and safety was the number one priority when we chose the location of our home. I have significant concerns about the proposed East Side Highway, including the following:

- 1) The exit ramp for Fort Jesse Rd. would run right in front of our home. I have concerns about the amount of traffic this exit would create as well as the safety of my children playing in our yard. I also have concerns about how dangerous it would be to turn left out of our neighborhood (from Rexel) onto Fort Jesse.*
- 2) With exit ramps, come businesses such as gas stations, truck stops, etc. I have no desire to look out my front window to see one of these businesses in my front yard. This brings a whole new level of fear to my brain as I think about having thousands of strange people near my home and my children on a daily basis.*
- 3) I have significant concerns regarding the dangers of having a major highway less than 500 feet from my home. While I do have worries about the noise this will bring, I am more concerned about the speed of cars traveling so near our homes and family members.*
- 4) While safety is my main concern, I do also have concerns about the financial impact this will have on my home and the rest of the homes in the neighborhood. While I understand that real estate has taken a hit throughout the Bloomington-Normal, I imagine with the highway running through our backyard, there will be many, many residents of this neighborhood selling their homes (myself included). Because I feel so strongly about not having this highway near my neighborhood, I would be willing to sell my home for less than it's worth, which would then hurt others in my neighborhood. If others feel similarly, I can only imagine the impact this could have on the housing market in this neighborhood.*

I urge you to listen to the pleas of us against the East Side Highway. I have tried to see the benefits of this project by attending the meeting and reading various articles online; however, it seems the negatives are many while I am unable to find the positives. To be honest, I am still quite baffled as to how this project will benefit any of us living on the east side. Additionally, I have difficulty understanding how it will benefit the community as a whole. It seems to me, this seems like a large amount of money to spend for a small benefit (if any) to the Bloomington-Normal residents. As a federal employee myself, I understand the importance of spending each penny in the most responsible way, and this does not seem to be an appropriate allocation of funds.

Please consider my concerns when making your decision to negatively impact the lives of so many.

Response:

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

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The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I ask that you avoid the CR2100E alternative because of potential significant loss of Kickapoo Creek wetlands and loss of farmland.

I strongly affirm the assessment that an Expressway or Freeway be implemented instead of the Arterial option, so as to minimize urban sprawl.

Response:

The alternatives that utilized CR 2100 E were eliminated during the Alignment Analysis, in part due to impacts to farmland and Kickapoo Creek, and inconsistencies with The McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Your comment regarding facility type has been noted. Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

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I have several concerns about the proposed project.

- 1. Loss of farmland - a precious resource unique to McLean County. Many indications suggest that in the not too distant future, such fertile soil will be more precious than ever for growing food our local population can eat. Local food production is a hallmark of security and resilience for consumers, employment for many, and an ongoing source of income/security for producers. With energy prices at best uncertain, transportation of food over long distances may simply not be affordable.*
- 2. Isolation of some proximate subdivisions/developments from the rest of B-N - loss of community identity*
- 3. Need - I am reading that recent population projections are much lower than when the plan was conceived - will our current highway system not serve the area's population very well for the next 20-25 years?*
- 4. Missing an opportunity to plan for a very different, more energy realistic transportation future, that is, the current planning encourages reliance on gasoline powered, often single passenger automobiles versus tuning into increased public transportation development.*
- 5. Massive expense - the recent news articles about infrastructure failure such as the streets and sewer lines in West Bloomington suggest to me that any available money should be allocated to upgrading and improving infrastructure throughout the entire community - West, East, South, and North, rather than being committed to a project whose rationale may well be obsolete already.*

Thank you very much for this opportunity to reply and comment.

Response:

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

A stand-alone Transit Alternative was evaluated for its effectiveness to meet the Purpose and Need Statement of the project. Several modes of bus transit and light rail (including streetcar/trolley) were considered. The Bloomington-Normal urbanized area year 2035 population and employment densities were reviewed in evaluating the appropriate transit mode to serve the area. Given the population density thresholds, Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services would likely be the best fit for the project study area. Premium transit modes such as Light Rail Transit are not recommended because the projected population density will not support them.

Given that the system wide ridership for all of Bloomington-Normal is less than 5,000 trips per day with 11 fixed routes, the implementation of Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services as a stand-alone alternative would not meet the unmet demand of over 50,000 trips per day within the study area. Unmet

demand is defined as the amount of volume reduction required on the failing road in relation to the capacity of the road. However, transit may provide merits as a supplement to the ESH improvements being considered for the project and will be further evaluated as alignments are refined and design progresses. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including transit) can be maximized through the development of an ESH.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

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To whom it may concern,

I am emailing in response to the possible placement of the east side highway that has been discussed recently. My concerns can be summarized by the following points, which were raised by many at the most recent meeting.

I am particularly concerned about the safety of children in the areas closest to the freeway exits/entrances as well as the noise level of highway traffic in close proximity to residential areas.

I am also concerned about lower property values in affected subdivisions and limited resale values of homes closest to the freeway. Also, limited use by residents in day to day travel and use of the freeway as a bypass by semi-trucks and other commercial traffic is problematic. Other points of concern are: increased commercial zoning along the freeway, resulting in significant truck traffic exiting onto Ireland Grove, Route 9, G.E. and Ft. Jesse roads; increased traffic congestion on those intersecting roads; West side businesses that depend on I-55 and I-74 traffic will see decreased revenues Freeway traffic exiting at a high speed and coming upon slow moving farm equipment is hazardous.

In addition, East side population growth projections on which the freeway proposal is based are (at best) questionable.

Most importantly, why a freeway? Why do we continually rehash the same failed idea every ten years?

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Response:

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative

facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The design criteria used for overpasses or underpasses at crossroads will make allowances for the height and width of farm implements. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm implement issues. It is important to note, however, that slow moving farm vehicles would be prohibited from accessing the ESH due to safety reasons.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

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I am writing regarding the proposed east-side bypass. I wanted to take the time to express why such an endeavor would only harm the community that we all know and love. Though there are many reasons why this plan should not be put into place, there are three major problems with the East-Side Bypass: (1) the current route of the bypass threatens to constrict and ultimately halt the eastward expansion of Bloomington Normal; (2) the bypass is based upon unrealistic population growth patterns and job expansion and as such, is unneeded; and (3) the current proposed route will cause a decrease in revenue to local Bloomington-Normal businesses, during an already economically difficult time.

As stated above, the current route of the bypass will harm eastward growth of Bloomington-Normal and result in increased commercial traffic within a couple hundred feet of current residential neighborhoods. This result of this increased traffic will cause noise and scenic pollution to a currently peaceful country setting. One of the subdivisions most severely impacted by this bypass would be the Grove on Kickapoo Creek. Further, the bypass will limit the ability of developers to expand subdivisions eastward and poison potential buyers from wanting to live next to a freeway. Additionally, commercial service businesses will want to expand along the bypass, transmuting a quiet residential side of town into a service industry area. These negative aspects of living next to the bypass would result in decreased home values and harm residents of Bloomington-Normal in an already depressed housing market. Therefore, one of the principal problems with the East-Side bypass plan is the negative impact on existing residential developments and potential future development of the East-Side of Bloomington-Normal.

The second major problem with the bypass plan is it is unneeded. The current projections of growth for the area are no longer sustainable as a result of the national economic issues. State Farm admittedly has decreased hiring workers and, in fact, has closed multiple regional offices. Simply put, the population growth of the area does not support the need for a bypass.

Finally, the current route of the bypass will accomplish exactly that—it will bypass commercial traffic from stopping at local businesses. This will result in decreased commercial revenue and tax revenue. Both of these results would simply make current economic problems worse.

Therefore, I would ask that you do anything in your power to help defeat the current bypass plan between I-55 and I-74, otherwise known as the "East-Side Bypass." This plan will hurt businesses and individuals alike in the Bloomington-Normal area. Voters are sure to remember the result of these types of projects that impact them on such a personal level.

Response:

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Visual impacts will be assessed during the Environmental Assessment Analysis and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) has been formed. Landscaping and aesthetics will be discussed with the group.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

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employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value.

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I am writing regarding the proposed east-side bypass. I wanted to take the time to express why such an endeavor would only harm the community that we all know and love. Though there are many reasons why this plan should not be put into place, there are three major problems with the East-Side Bypass: (1) the current route of the bypass threatens to constrict and ultimately halt the eastward expansion of Bloomington Normal; (2) the bypass is based upon unrealistic population growth patterns and job expansion and as such, is unneeded; and (3) the current proposed route will cause a decrease in revenue to local Bloomington-Normal businesses, during an already economically difficult time.

As stated above, the current route of the bypass will harm eastward growth of Bloomington-Normal and result in increased commercial traffic within a couple hundred feet of current residential neighborhoods. This result of this increased traffic will cause noise and scenic pollution to a currently peaceful country setting. One of the subdivisions most severely impacted by this bypass would be the Grove on Kickapoo Creek. Further, the bypass will limit the ability of developers to expand subdivisions eastward and poison potential buyers from wanting to live next to a freeway. Additionally, commercial service businesses will want to expand along the bypass, transmuting a quiet residential side of town into a service industry area. These negative aspects of living next to the bypass would result in decreased home values and harm residents of Bloomington-Normal in an already depressed housing market. Therefore, one of the principal problems with the East-Side bypass plan is the negative impact on existing residential developments and potential future development of the East-Side of Bloomington-Normal.

The second major problem with the bypass plan is it is unneeded. The current projections of growth for the area are no longer sustainable as a result of the national economic issues. State Farm admittedly has decreased hiring workers and, in fact, has closed multiple regional offices. Simply put, the population growth of the area does not support the need for a bypass.

Finally, the current route of the bypass will accomplish exactly that—it will bypass commercial traffic from stopping at local businesses. This will result in decreased commercial revenue and tax revenue. Both of these results would simply make current economic problems worse.

Therefore, I would ask that you do anything in your power to help defeat the current bypass plan between I-55 and I-74, otherwise known as the "East-Side Bypass." This plan will hurt businesses and individuals alike in the Bloomington-Normal area. Voters are sure to remember the result of these types of projects that impact them on such a personal level.

Response:

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Visual impacts will be assessed during the Environmental Assessment Analysis and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) has been formed. Landscaping and aesthetics will be discussed with the group.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It

has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I disagree with the need for the highway. Expand Towanda Barnes and take it down to I-74 rather than ruining the grove subdivision by placing this road likely less than half a mile from the people who live on Kell Ave. It isolates the subdivision even more from the rest of the city and destroys home values.

Response:

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

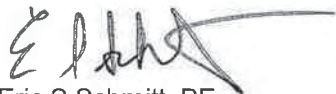
Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S Schmitt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



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Please do not use my name in any public records...

I imagine hearing all of the negative feedback about the East Side Highway is overwhelming. My approach is to provide a better solution. Everyone is talking about how this highway is a terrible project; however I do believe there is a benefit that is being missed. Yes, the highway will help as the east side of Bloomington expands, but even more immediate I think there is a community being overlooked that the highway could dramatically help.

The village of Downs is seeing steady growth and is becoming a suburb of Bloomington. A highway connecting 55 to 74 right next to Downs would bring more industry to the community. After living in the surrounding Downs community almost my whole life, I can tell you that the majority of the surrounding community would not mind to see some growth in the area but also want to keep more of a small town feeling. I think the highway would possibly bring a fast food restaurant or two, as well as maybe a few other stores.

On Towanda Barnes, you are probably hearing negative feedback mostly from the 3 neighborhoods of Lamplighter, The Grove, and Eagle View. The two neighborhoods that I believe should be most concerned are the Groves and Lamplighter. The idea when these individuals who moved to these neighborhoods was to get out of town but still be close enough to reach town and work within 10 to 15 minutes. The Eagle View on the other hand, is a neighborhood built right on Towanda Barnes between Fort Jesse and GE. If these people did not see that area being built up from its current location, they made a poor choice in picking a spot to live.

The interchange at Ireland Grove Road is really close to the Grove's and this highway will affect property values. Instead of cutting through between Towanda Barnes and the Groves what if you go East about a mile behind the Groves? Then you continue south and hook up to I-74 around Downs. The Downs

community does have a lot of neighborhoods but if you cut behind the Groves and continue southwest you should bypass 90% of them.

I like the interchange at Route 9, gives easy access to the airport, Avanti's, the hotels, and St. Patrick's Church. Honestly, whether this highway goes through there or not I expect that to be almost fully developed in the next 10 years.

This way the Groves doesn't have a huge highway right out their door and Downs can see an increase in industry. I think this could be a win-win situation. Let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Response:

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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April 6, 2012

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I was unable to attend the January 11 public meeting relating to the future corridor for the East Side Highway, but I want to express my sincere hope that the final proposed site for the corridor will be the one which has the least adverse affect on Kickapoo Creek and its surrounding wetlands. I have spent many hours on the creek over many years. It is a little known jewel as it flows thru McLean County with the wildlife that considers it home, the fish and aquatic life that inhabit its waters and the gentle stream flow that meanders thru the countryside. To put in a road that adversely affects the creek and its surrounding land would be a very short sighted decision.

To foster urban sprawl at the expense of damaging the Kickapoo Creek environment by putting in the proposed road where it will do the most harm to that environment amounts to taking away from the citizens of today and the future of our area the opportunity to enjoy the little known treasure we call the Kickapoo.

The proposal that takes the least amount of farmland out of production should weigh heavily on any decision. Our area around B-N has already lost 1000's of acres to "progress". I'm not so sure all of that "progress" has been that beneficial.

I hope that the decision on the location of this proposed future road will first and foremost be guided by what location will have the least affect on the Kickapoo and its surrounding environment. Such a decision is in the best interest of the present public and all who come after us.

Response:

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the

Environmental Assessment cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I am a Towanda resident in Lamplighter Subdivision. I am too ill to attend meetings, but our daughter, Jeanette, went to the meeting on Wednesday and has informed me of # 124, 125, 126, 127.

I think any of these will congest the traffic too much at Airport Road area or Towanda Barnes Road, which our daughter explained to one of the engineers.

Jeanette and I looked at previous possibilities. Could you please tell me why the T11 option wasn't chosen. I do think that connecting T11 with T 4 goes too far east; to connect T11 with CR 2100 instead would be a good possibility. The T11 option would affect us as home owners bordering the field; however we realize that The ESH needs to be built somewhere, and T11 seems like the best area in Towanda Township.

If it would be easier to discuss this by phone, please call me at 772 672 4905 (temporarily in FL right now).

Response:

The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward.

The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

Both of the two remaining "T" sections connecting the ESH to I-55 provide connectivity across I-55. Section T-1 connects to Northtown Road (1800N) and T-2 connects to Ziebarth Road (1900N). Other alternative sections were considered at the north end of the project. These sections were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section T-3 (a north-south section immediately west of Towanda which traverses along a segment of Towanda Barnes Road) was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to engineering concerns, specifically because its interchange configuration with I-55 would have been highly complex, likely making it less safe and more costly.
- Section T-4 (a north-south section located along 2150E extended and associated only with alignments BN-4 and BN-5) was eliminated when the associated main alignments of BN-4 and BN-5 were eliminated.
- Section T-11 (an "S" shaped section which connects BN-3 at 2000E to I-55 at 2150 E extended) was eliminated during the Macro Analysis for disproportionately high impacts to prime and important farmland.
- Section T-19 (a diagonal section immediately west of Towanda which intersects I-55 at the same location as T-3 and serves only alignment BN-3) was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to engineering concerns, specifically because its interchange configuration with I-55 would have been highly complex. Additionally, providing full access to Towanda Barnes Road would have required a northbound ramp going through the Lamplighter subdivision, resulting in more residential impacts.

The alternatives that utilized CR 2100 E were eliminated during the Alignment Analysis, in part due to impacts to farmland and Kickapoo Creek, and inconsistencies with The McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Concerns for the East side Highway:

- 1. All four alternatives take out a (bi?)centennial farm at the interchange near Towanda. Technically, configurations 124 and 125 don't go through the farm, but the farm is located within the south interchange loop, and blocked from access due to the Towanda-Barnes bridge. The other two configurations run through the barns. All four alternatives also take out a house north of the farm.*
- 2. Configurations 124 and 125 will eliminate 1800N a/k/a Northtown Rd. Despite the fact that this road is not yet paved with asphalt and is less than two lanes wide, it is a common pathway for Normal Community High School students to arrive at school. To avoid the gnarled mess at Raab and Airport, and to avoid turning left into the school, they turn onto Airport Rd from Old 66, turn left onto 1800N, right onto T-B, right onto Raab Rd, and right into the school. Also, if 1800N is removed, alternate access to Old 66 is required to and from Towanda-Barnes Road, and not through Towanda. It also appears that 1800N will be eliminated with 126 & 127, given that no bridge is delineated over the bypass section at that intersection.*
- 3. There is a sanitary lift station at the intersection of Old 66, Airport and 1800N, which would be obliterated by 124 & 125. Also, the waterway which goes under 1800N at the intersection of Airport, floods consistently, and when it floods, it usually covers a good 20 feet of the road.*
- 4. A creek goes under Towanda-Barnes road about 10 feet south of the intersection of 1800N. How would this branch be affected by the interchange? This isn't a little ditch creek, and it does serve water overflow during heavy rains, typically rising to a few feet under the bridge in Lamplighter. Configurations 124 and 125 show the bypass crossing the creek once, and the north exit loop crossing it twice (both of which would need to be leading the road UP to Towanda-Barnes, since the plan is to raise Towanda-Barnes as a bridge over the freeway). Alignments 126 and 127 have the roads crossing just once, though one of the crossings is near where the exit leaves the*

bypass. Also, for winter weather, how will salt and other de-icing techniques affect the creek and the wildlife around it? With the exit as a curve on an incline, it seems the crews will need use a greater amount than they would otherwise. Furthermore, with that complicated of a construction and the amount of grade necessary to raise T-B over a bypass, which is over a creek, what will be the environmental, noise, and health impact during construction?

5. There are also people who walk not only along that creek, but also along Towanda-Barnes road. A walking bridge would need to be provided, or a bridge wide enough to provide bike lanes.
6. How would the weight of the road affect the old tiles? They are aging, and some have already had to be replaced/repared in Lamplighter.
7. What about the proposed bike trail between Towanda and Normal along Old 66?

Response:

The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced was a criterion considered during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high impact to residences were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), will remain a criterion of comparison throughout the Environmental Assessment. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the Environmental Assessment; but all resources impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

The four remaining alternatives impact Northtown Road to varying degrees. Alternatives 124 and 125 directly connect the ESH to Northtown Road. Alternatives 126 and 127 directly connect the ESH to Ziebarth Road. Northtown Road access to the ESH for Alternatives 126 and 127 is still being studied at this time. It is anticipated that existing Northtown Road east of Towanda Barnes Road would be disconnected from Towanda Barnes Road due to the proximity of an anticipated ESH/Towanda Barnes Road interchange. However, cars traveling east on Northtown Road will still be able to access Towanda Barnes Road through the ESH/Towanda Barnes Road interchange. It is anticipated that all of the remaining alternatives will provide better accessibility to Normal residents north of I-55. Normal Community High students would be able to travel to school from the west using Veterans Parkway, or from the east using the ESH. This should reduce congestion at the Raab Rd/Airport Rd intersection.

The project team is aware of the sanitary lift station and it was considered when the preliminary alternatives were developed and analyzed. The alignments will be further revised during the Environmental Assessment. The lift station will be avoided if feasible.

A hydraulic analysis will be completed during the Environmental Assessment to address flooding and compensatory storage issues. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying impacts to streams, wetlands, water quality (de-icing chemicals), in addition to potential impacts to noise levels and air quality.

As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

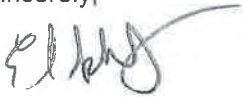
The network of existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian routes was reviewed as part of the Alignment Analysis to determine the proximity of the routes to the proposed alternative alignments.

Alignments further from the network will have reduced opportunities for multimodal use. A representative of the local bicycling community is a member of the Community Working Group (CWG) which serves an advisory role to the project study group. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including bikes) can be maximized through the development of an ESH. Through this FWG, bike and pedestrian paths will continue to be evaluated in conjunction with the ESH as the project continues.

During Phase II final design (after the EA is complete), coordination with impacted property owners will assist in the identification of field tile locations. Exploration trenching will be conducted on both sides of the right-of-way prior to construction to locate any unknown tile that may be impacted by the newly constructed roadway. When located, they are replaced within the right-of-way with stronger concrete pipe to protect against the structural load of the new roadway.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S Schmitt', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

The East Side Highway would negatively impact our family living in The Grove subdivision in several ways. First, the noise from the highway would be very noticeable with the close proximity to our subdivision. I've lived near a highway before and the noise travels farther than you think. The increased traffic and congestion would be an added inconvenient for residents near the on/off ramps. The construction of the highway would lower the property values of homes in The Grove due to its close proximity to the highway. It would make more sense to locate the on/off ramps adjacent to Towanda-Barnes for easy access and to at least put some distance between the highway and the subdivision.

Response:

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

As the project moves forward, interchange geometry will continue to be refined to address access needs and minimize impacts. The configurations presented at the fourth Public Information Meeting were preliminary.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

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Dear Eastside Highway Authorities and Advisors,

I am adamantly opposing to the building of a federally funded connection between 55 and 74 for a multitude of reason. However I will highlight only four points which impact our family and our neighbors family.

- 1) *Safety: The near proximity of many residences near a freeway presents a unnecessary risk. Due to the quick entry and exit from the residential neighborhoods and school grounds target our family's to violent crimes. Teach our children "stranger danger" will not come early enough. The fact that environmental and farmland impact are enough to eliminate other proposal but children's safety is not is absurd and the critical criteria's must to reevaluated before a proposal is made.*
- 2) *Fiscal: The federal funded freeway is not fiscally responsible in a variety of matrixes. It is someone else's checkbook, does not allow for optimized sales tax revenues, freight fuel savings vs building dollars spent are negatively unbalanced.*
 - a. *If this proposal would be funded by the state and/or local governments, this conversation would have been suspended long ago. The only reason this is appealing for local and state government is because it is someone else's checkbook.*
 - b. *By building a freeway next to many residences sales tax revenues will be further reduced because of a reduction of commercial property's which will collect sales tax revenue.*
 - c. *Fuel dollars saved by over the road vehicles is near zero or a loss of fuel dollars. This freeway's only purpose is those freight vehicles traveling from I-80/I-55 to I-74. These freight vehicles are better served to use I-57. By traveling the proposed freeway would result in a loss of efficiency and inherently negatively impact the environment.*
- 3) *Property: the two proposed freeway routes in the proximity of the many new construction neighborhoods will result in a significant reduction of property values. In the past few years, we have seen values decrease upward of 20%. Should the federally funded freeway be approved we will see further reductions as a result of the approval alone.*

4) *Isolation of a community: Key to the elimination of any plan was the following test... Does the plan isolate the community? The proposed plans of a freeway between neighborhoods and Bloomington-Normal's systems causes an isolation to the draws of the community. This alone should eliminate both plans*

Response:

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind. The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

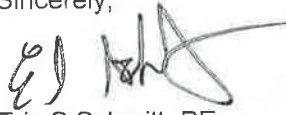
The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west

side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

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My family and I moved here almost 3 years ago. When looking for a appropriate neighborhood for my children I had found the Grove Subdivision had everything that we were looking for. Beautiful land, very peaceful, new school, future park... If I would have seen a highway in front of this neighborhood I would never moved here. It takes away from everything the subdivision, Kickapoo Creek, and school is trying to promote.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

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Comment 1

I strongly urge the agencies involved in this assessment to recommend the "no build" option. The two remaining options (outside of no build), will not simulate growth on the east side, but rather bring issues that are rarely present today (additional crime, pollution and disruption of farmland). Additionally, the purpose for the highway (population growth and overused city streets) have not been proven. Finally, the loss of revenue to businesses on the west side of Bloomington should be considered – particularly the Market Street exit. Again – I strongly urge "no build"!! I purchased property within feet of the proposed highway six years ago and having a truck stop in my backyard will most definitely affect the value of my property, much less the quality of life we currently have.

Comment 2

I strongly urge the agencies involved in this assessment to recommend the "no build" option!! The two remaining "build" options will not stimulate growth, but rather reduce it. With a highway, the eastside will most definitely see increased crime, pollution and noise. Additionally, the purpose of the highway (population growth and overused city streets) has not been proven. Finally, the loss of revenue to businesses on the west side of Bloomington should be considered – particularly those at the Market Street exit. Again, I strongly urge "no build"!! I purchased property six years ago that would literally be within feet of the proposed highway. Having a truckstop in my backyard will most definitely effect the value of property and quality of life we currently have.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found

to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility

will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

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To whom it may concern,

I'm sure by now you have received many letters from concerned citizens about the bypass. The talking points have included safety, noise, lower property values, limited resale, etc. I agree wholeheartedly with all those points but I also want to present some common sense items based on living on Ireland Grove Road for over 25 years. I have driven up and down Towanda -Barnes and come into town on Route 9 thousand of times. The only time there is excessive traffic on Towanda-Barnes and Ireland Grove is when people are going to work at State Farm-they all turn west- or they are going to the schools on Ireland Grove. Common sense tells me that people are not going to travel farther east to go west as long as Towanda- Barnes exists. The rest of the day you could shoot a cannon down that road and not hit 10 cars.

Another reason for the bypass is to get people to the airport. I drive Route 9 all the time, and have NEVER had to wait for traffic coming or going in or out of the airport. Now that we may lose 40% of the passengers, there is less of a need. Besides that, how many people from out of town actually use the airport and should we mess up the lives of Mclean County residents to please non-residents. I urge all of you to travel these roads at different times of the day and see for yourself the traffic patterns. Let's not let common sense be overridden by local politics drive to leave a legacy.

Lastly, what happens if one of these roads is chosen? I happen to be one of the houses that is supposed to be destroyed if the closest alternative is chosen. Put yourself in my position. My property will have the equivalent of a "scarlet letter" attached to it. I may not be able to sell it freely without attachments. My heirs will be left with a less than desirable property. If I'm still in the area, I will be forced to leave my home. Put yourself in my shoes. Kicked out of your home for a road that at best is based on speculation, not on hard facts. Do we really need our version of a road to nowhere?

Response:

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

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The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

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We are one of the original homeowners in the Eagle View Subdivision. We relocated from California for employment reasons and moved into our home located at 8 Brookline Court in July of 2006. Let us be clear; we are for the "NO BUILD" option/alternative. During our numerous discussions with our builder and realtor, there was never any mention of an east side highway. Most of the conversations centered around living on the east side, in a new and coveted subdivision with plans for a residential park (grant in place but no additional city funds?), and within the Unit 5 School District boundaries. We find it ironic coming from one cash-strapped state to another, that Illinois and Bloomington-Normal would even entertain the thought of such a costly and disruptive project. We question the population projections based on our six years of living in the Bloomington- Normal area and also question the insurance industry growth projections based on our combined thirty-three (33) plus years of employment experience, including consolidation and relocation, with a major insurance company. We are not only concerned with the location and proximity of the east side highway but also the proposed Fort Jesse interchange as our home backs up to Fort Jesse Road, east of Towanda Barnes Road. We are confident that our other concerns align with the residents of Eagle View and the other impacted subdivisions:

- *Safety-this ties into the absence of Eagle View Park and the risk that our children and all Eagle View residents face when attempting to cross Towanda Barnes road to get to Bittner Park.*
- *Increased traffic along Towanda Barnes and east on Fort Jesse which will impact the inlets/outlets for the Eagle View Subdivision.*
- *Increased noise and air pollution.*
- *Decreased property value and neighborhood appeal:*
 - *Unable to sell to value or sell at all.*
- *Eyesore-both highway and potential noise barrier(s).*
- *Residential safety issue-highway provides accessible entry/exit for offenders.*
- *Potential soil/settlement issues due to heavy construction.*

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a Freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the next stage of analysis, the Environmental Assessment Analysis. There are guidelines established in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – Title 23 – Highways, which address constructive impacts to parks. A constructive impact is a not a direct physical impact, but an impact resultant of adjacent or nearby construction. An example of a constructive impact would be noise. If there is a decibel threshold that is exceeded, or a decibel change that is considered excessive based upon the receptor definition (in this case, a "park"), then mitigation might be required. Although the Eagle View park doesn't currently

exist, it has been platted. The project team will assume development of the property as a park in the analysis.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Visual impacts will be assessed during the Environmental Assessment Analysis and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) has been formed. Landscaping and aesthetics will be discussed with the group.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

During the later stages of the environmental assessment, geotechnical investigations will be conducted to determine soil types and identify locations of unsuitable material that may contribute to unacceptable ground settlement. Construction practices will account for the remediation or removal of any unsuitable soils in the roadbed.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

One of the current 2 options being considered goes directly through our house. I was given a brochure of eminent domain & it states that we would be offered market value for our home.

We live in a 100 yr. old farmhouse we've spent 14 years making into a beautiful home for our large family. We have 2 ½ acres, a 100-yr. old barn that is used for community barn dances, a machine shed, and a 4,000 sq. ft. 5 bedroom 3 bath farmhouse. Market value doesn't even come close to what it will cost us to replace what we currently have.

Even if the possible highway wouldn't possibly go through our home, I wouldn't support it. I've seen all the research & I do not believe it is necessary. Should it move forward & go thru our home, I believe replacement value is what should be offered to the unfortunate families whose dream will be taken away.

Response:

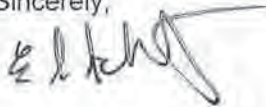
The project team understands the emotional ties that people have to their homes. Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences impacted. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Procedures for land acquisition will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and the IDOT Land Acquisition Procedures Manual. The policies detail when compensation to properties with proximity impacts is appropriate. Most land acquisition activities will occur during Phase II design, after the Environmental Assessment has been completed.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

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I support the no-build option for the proposed eastside highway. I think the location is too close to where too many people live and to where development is sure to occur. It isn't good to live by major highways: air quality is reduced, noise and filth is increased. Why compromise people's quality of life when the road can be built anywhere to the east?

I remember when the road was proposed about 10 years ago. Two reasons given for building the road were to increase access to State Farm corporate headquarters, and to promote usage of Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA). In the passing years, State Farm has stopped its explosive rate of employee growth. Through increased automation, it's not likely growth will increase to the rate of 20 years ago.

I was surprised to hear several weeks ago of a proposal to reduce funding to CIRA, to encourage use of the Peoria and Champaign-Urbana facilities because Central IL doesn't need 3 airports within a 2-hour drive. This would be a cost-saving strategy. I don't see the same justification for building the road. If there is a different reason now, then perhaps the location should also be different.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

While in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than several of the other eliminated alignments, the remaining alignments have passed four levels of increasingly detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. They contain no unrealistic or non-feasible alternatives.
2. They are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project; these alignments were found to best provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will help to accommodate projected traffic increases from the development.
3. They have fewer "direct" impacts on existing homes (i.e., acquisitions) and fewer acres of farmland removed from production than alignments which were eliminated.
4. They have fewer impacts to primary agricultural land, are less likely to encourage development inconsistent with the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, do not cross the main branch of the Kickapoo Creek, and are closer to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes than alignments which were eliminated.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois

MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

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April 6, 2012



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January 20, 2012

Re: Eastside Highway project

After attending the meeting on Jan. 11, 2012 we find that there are still major areas of concern –mainly the taking away of prime farm land, the loss of homesteads, and the concern of safety along the proposed route. Several east/west roads would either be cut-off from the north/south roads that are now available or new access roads would need to be constructed leading to the loss of more farmland. There has not been sufficient evidence presented that shows there is a need at this time for the proposed highway, as there is adequate access to north/south transportation means already in place. There has not been sufficient evidence presented either that would show the definite expansion of the east side for businesses. We were the tenant farmer for the Bozarth farm for over 35 years and have first-hand experience of needing to travel 2 miles to get the farm land that was on the south side of I74. This is a major concern for farmers who will be losing close and continuous access to their farm land. With the Bozarth farm being designated as a Centennial Farm the best choice seems to be not building the road as proposed, if building it at all. There needs to certainly be further study as to a better way of hooking the bypass route into I 74 without homesteads being lost. A further major concern needs to be the financial status of the State of Illinois-it is certainly nothing to be proud of or something that concerned citizens need to be just adding to.

See additional pages.

- enter search here
- Home/Overview
 - Map
 - Information About the Study
 - Involvement/Public Participation
 - Download Project Documents
 - Contact Us

Land blocked parcels on easement of

- Zimmerman - Jackson
- Dorothy Lepp
- Frances Bozarth - Centennial Farm Dec 11 - set 12.8 AC

Farmsteads eliminated

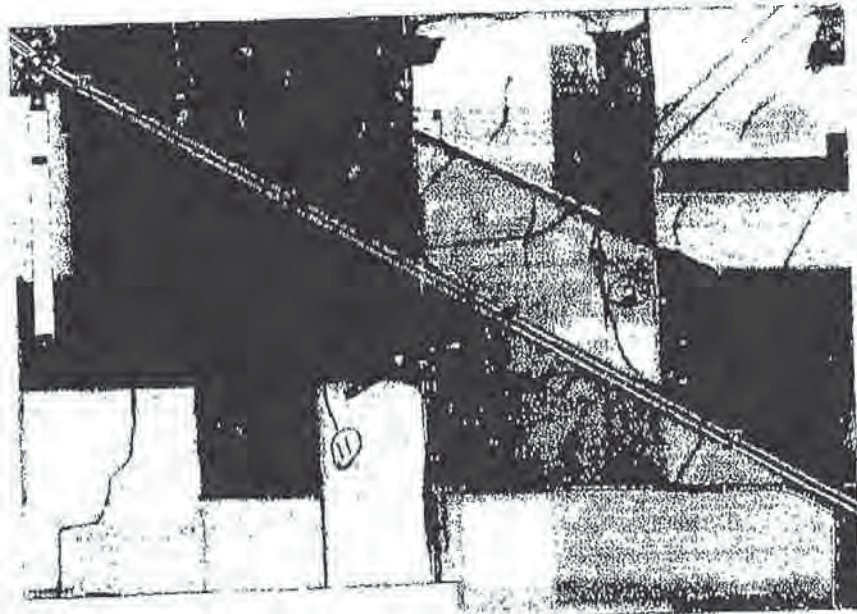
A. Larry + Louise Reaser + cell tower

B. Bob + Bonnie Mitchell - Farm home 1947

Below is an interactive map of the Bloomington-Normal area. It contains four alignments remaining under consideration as of January 3, 2012. This map will continue to be updated as the project moves forward to display the range of alignments developed as well as environmental and cultural resources identified.

- To enlarge the map, click on the checkerboard icon outside the upper right corner of the map.
- To pan, click the arrows around the earth icon in the upper left corner of the map, or click the left button on your mouse and drag your mouse over the map.
- To zoom in/out use the zoom tool on the left side, clicking the plus sign (+) to zoom in and clicking the minus sign (-) to zoom out.
- To change from a street view to an aerial view or to turn on/off overlays such as the project limits, click on the double square icon in the upper right corner of the map and check/uncheck the desired overlays.

C. just south of Rt 150 Mary Raycraft



Advocate BraMo

Land blocked parcels on west of 1750

- Bob + Bonnie Mitchell 35 ac
- Steward Dan Bozarth 109 ac
- Hughart 92 ac

Larry Reaser

1-9-12

Bob + Bonnie Mitchell 1/20/12

January 12, 2011

Information for January 11, 2012 Comment Sheets addressing proposal for Eastside Roadway.

Proposal D2 on map from Route 150 -Route 74. This diagonally proposed route land blocks 6 properties. These properties are in Sections 25, 26, 35 & 36 in Bloomington Township, and are on the east & west side of county road 1750 E. The following 3 parcels are on the east side of Road 1750 E and will be blocked.

1. Parcel of land on Zimmerman/Jackson
2. Parcel of land on Harold Bozarth (128 AC) On December 2011, this farm was granted prime and important farmland, a Centennial Farm. This family lost their lane to Township Road 850 when Route 74 was built. They have a blacktop lane over 1 mile long to gain access to Road 1750 from the 2 houses and farm buildings. This would be blocked.
3. Parcel of land owned by Franzie and Dorothy Loepp.

The following 3 parcels are on the west side of Road 1750 E and will be blocked.

1. Parcel of land on Bob and Bonnie Mitchell (35 AC)
2. Parcel of land on Steve and Dan Bozarth (109 AC)
3. Parcel of land on Hughart Family (92 AC)

The following farmsteads will be eliminated:

1. Larry and Louise Reeser farmstead and American Cell Tower with AT&T and Verizon.
2. Bob and Bonnie Mitchell farmstead in family since 1947
3. Mary Raycraft farmstead just south of Route 150.

We support the No Build option, or D4 or S2M Route from Route 150 to Route 74. The D4 or S2M option does NOT do the following:

1. Does not land block any parcels of land
2. Does not eliminate any farmsteads
3. Does not cross or block any prime and important farmland (like the Harold Bozarth Centennial Farm)
4. Does not have any Cell Towers (like the Reeser Farm)

This highway was introduced as a farmer friendly road initially. At the last meeting we heard it would be a bypass (freeway) with only limited entrances and exits, making it very inconvenient to get from one side of the road to the other side.



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Response:

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact

analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

The project team understands the emotional ties that people have to their homes, especially if those homes have been in the family for multiple generations. Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section D-1 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to disproportionately high impacts to residences.
- Section D-3 was eliminated during the Macro Analysis because of the skewed curve it contained and because it offered no advantages over Section D-2. Skews are points of intersection at angles less than 90° that present safety issues.
- Section D-4 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis because of its skewed crossing of Towanda-Barnes Road and US 150.
- Section D-5 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

The alternatives were developed to minimize impacts to utilities. The locations of all utilities which could conflict with a roadway facility (such as power transmission lines, cell phone towers, sewage pump stations, etc.) were evaluated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis and will be further evaluated for the remaining alignments during the Environmental Assessment

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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It appears that the intent of Public Information Meeting #4 was to communicate to the public and stakeholders that the Eastside Highway project was required in order to facilitate growth on the eastside and to accommodate the resulting traffic. I would ask those in favor to respond to the following question. Did the westside grow as a result of the interstate system? I would suggest that the eastside grew to get away from it! Growth of eastside neighborhoods is likely due to the fact that they were more desirable because thru-traffic, noise, crime and beggars that are associated with free-way systems doesn't exist. Construction of such a highway system will almost certainly reduce the eastside to issues pointed out above. In addition, zoning decisions could lend to truck stops literally in the back yard of residents that purchased in subdivisions adjacent to the highway system without any knowledge of this potential scenario when the purchase decision was made. As a concerned citizen, I would support the no-build option for this project. Moving forward with this project will most certainly have a negative impact on the property values and quality of life that myself and many friends and neighbors enjoy. It is very disheartening to think about impact that will result from this project on our home equities and "nest egg" that we intended to invest in just a few years ago.

Response:

There is a tendency to assume that because there is an interstate on the west side of Bloomington-Normal (I-55/I-74,) and because the west side of the cities has developed slower than the east side, the interstate highway was the direct cause of the obstructed growth. Several factors have impacted development on the west side. The rural road network utilizing one mile grids is not as complete on the west side as on the east side of Bloomington. Roads and travel on the west side were impacted prior to the development of the Interstate because of Sugar Creek and the location of several railroad lines. Because of Sugar Creek and the size of the floodplain, large expensive bridges are necessary and therefore road crossings are kept to a minimum. The east side is primarily high ground near the top of several watersheds and therefore the rural road network was more complete, and this facilitated development. However, the primary cause of obstructed growth on the west side was the lack of sanitary sewer. Much of the west side is downstream of the BNWRD sewage treatment plant on West Oakland

Avenue and requires expensive pumping stations to be served by sewers. The developed land on the east side of Bloomington-Normal was predominantly upstream of, and within the service area of, the West Oakland Avenue treatment plant. The undeveloped land on the east side of the cities is predominantly in the watershed of Kickapoo Creek and may be served by gravity to the BNWRD sewage treatment plant in Randolph Township.

Many of these constraints on the west side do not exist on the east side. The ESH is being planned from conception to be as transparent as possible to east-west connectivity and to enable east-west mobility.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value.

The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
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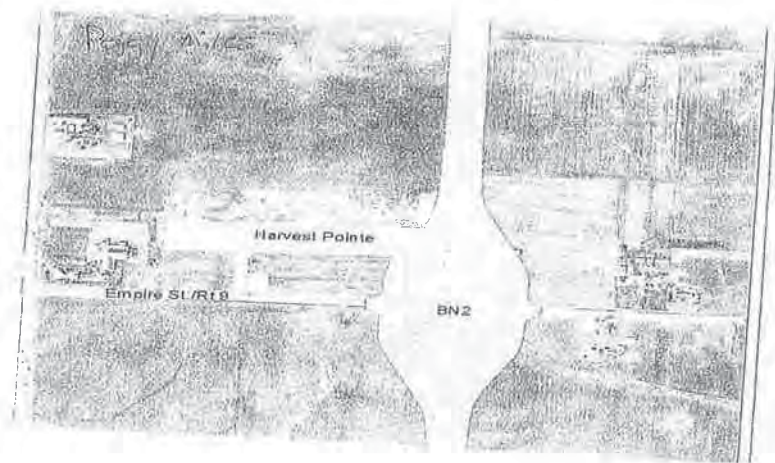
April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I live in Harvest Pointe subdivision in Bloomington and by the map giving out it appears a on/off ramp will be going in on Route 9, right by and in the subdivision. No information was given about the on/off ramps at the meeting. I have inclosed a map I was given by Peggy Miles of a overview of the ramp and subdivision. This map is very old in that it only shows a couple of houses. There are several houses and condos in the subdivision and by your map a road will have to go that is in now. My main question is what are your plans for Harvest Pointe subdivision because your off/on ramp goes through the back part of it. This will affect property values and overall how this subdivision will grow. When was the last time someone was here and looked at the subdivision and its location to the on/off ramp and how it will affect us.



Response:

The project team is aware of the location of new homes that have been built subsequent to the aerial flight. Preliminary Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following freeway interchange spacing standards. Diamond interchanges are initially proposed to reduce interchange footprint size. Where a standard diamond interchange impacts an environmental resource (e.g., home, public facility, or wetland), other types of interchange configurations such as a split diamond or a three-quadrant partial cloverleaf will be considered if the configuration could avoid or minimize impacts to the resource. The type of interchange will be refined in the Environmental Assessment for the recommended alignment.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

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Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I am writing to voice my opposition to the Eastside Highway as presently proposed. On January 11 I attended the public meeting at NCHS and feel that a convincing case for the highway was not presented. Further, if a road is to be constructed that there are far better viable options that have been eliminated. Below, I wanted to pass along my specific objections:

- 1. Is time spent in car excessive in the Bloom-Normal area – now and in 2035 if nothing is done? Who determines this? I strongly question the severity of the problem. I also question whether a freeway would decrease travel times for residents, particularly with the lack of access points. On a related point, should we not balance the quality of life issues that are generated from building a massive highway? I think many residents would rather spend an extra half hour in their car each week as opposed to having the noise pollution, etc. from a highway.*
- 2. The justification for the most westerly alternatives was the "Land Use Plan." Who's priorities are being considered? Some of the justifications for removing some of the eastern alternatives were stated as fact, when in fact there were very subjective elements to them. For example: "If prime farmland destroyed exceeded 720 acres, then that route was eliminated." So, routes that impact 800 acres are eliminated and the routes that impact 720 are kept? Another example: The engineer mentioned something regarding a "threshold value" related to impact to homeowners. Anything that exceeded 17 homeowners was rules out? The decision to choose 17 was a subjective determination and should not necessarily be set in stone. I think there were alternatives removed that certainly would have been very viable (and better).*
- 2. One of the reasons alternatives such as the "Leroy/Lexington blacktop" and other routes further east were eliminated was the fear that the land between that area and Towanda Barnes Rd. would develop haphazardly. What about a land use plan that is closely managed by the same authority that is trying to implement a new road? This would allow for a road to the far east and help steer development of the area and preserve farmland. I think this is one of the most important issues related to the proposed plan. Many*

alternatives were dropped because they were deemed too far east and that there was concern that the area between Towanda Barnes Rd and this proposed roadway would develop poorly. My opinion is that the westerly alternatives encroach severely on the many developments and eastern residential outline of Bloom-Normal. An alternative placed further to the east would allow residents and businesses the opportunity to locate in close proximity to the road or to avoid it. They would have the free will to do so whereas we would not be able to do so as it stands now.

4. *The negative impact of a by-pass on the western side of Bloom-Normal could be quite significant.*
5. *I don't recall there being much mention of the negative impact for the Harvest Point or the terrible effects to the quality of life to the residents of The Grove.*

Response:

The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

Per Federal guidance, transportation planning activities must consider existing and future land use plans.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. The screening process considered a range of impacts for each resource and assigned a unique threshold value for each resource based upon that range. The threshold value for each resource was determined by identifying breakpoints in the total range of impacts. Alternatives with impacts at or above the threshold value were eliminated. A sensitivity analysis was performed on the resource criteria used for elimination. For the analysis, the order of the criteria used was switched (e.g., residential displacements were used as the first, second, and third criteria, etc.) to see if results would be different. When the order of criteria used was switched, the alternatives remaining were identical. The threshold values were presented to the Community Working Group (CWG), an advisory group composed of local stakeholders. The CWG concurred with the threshold values.

One reason for presenting the project for concurrence to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other resource agencies is to verify that the process to date is reasonable and defensible. The subjective decisions made by the project team are reviewed by the agencies. Unanimous concurrence must be achieved to move forward with the project. A list of the resource agencies can be found in Appendix B of the Stakeholder's Involvement Plan located on the project website under the Downloads tab.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, visual impacts, community impacts, and water quality. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate impacts due to the ESH.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

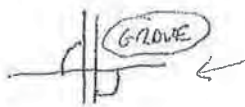
Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

- *The 6:10 mtg was well attended – This is the quantity of public attention you should have been getting all the time.*
- *This project is being mislabeled as a way to improve traffic flow for the locals, when it is really a completion of the B/N loop interstate.*
- *I specifically asked 3 representatives about truck traffic using this to shorten the interstate trip – all 3 tried to deny it, when everyone knows every truck will take this route – it will be more thru traffic than local*
- *There is a lot of talk regarding the 2035 land use map, yet no copies of that are on display*
- *What is going to happen with the no-mans land that will be created between this road & Towanda Barnes?*
- *While the theory is keeping this highway close to the 2035 plan limits should keep development close to the city – we all know the next big neighborhood will be further out because no one really wants to live right next to a major road – like the Grove went a mile out from Towanda Barnes. Over 700 new houses will be added to The Grove neighborhood – This road will not speed any of those commutes – I work on the south side near south main (51) and Hamilton Road. This will not improve my commute. I will continue to go Ireland Grove to Hershey to Hamilton to Morrissey to Rhodes to E Hamilton – I would not go any other route and neither will my neighbors who work at State Farm south.*

You owe it to every existing neighborhood to be as far from them as possible – staying as far west of The Grove and then swing east of the neighborhood on Empire. You should combine the middle sections into a new alternative.

On ramps/off ramps should be as far away from existing neighborhoods as possible. We should not have to hear cars accelerating or semi's engine bracing.

In closing, I think we are all being mis-lead about the purpose of this project and I am 100% against it. It is just a way to shorten interstate travel by eliminating having to go around B/N – this makes all the recent construction on 55 north of town pointless – because it will eliminate most of that traffic.



Better interchange layout because it is away from our quiet peaceful neighborhood – we moved out here for a reason.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass or complete a loop around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a “bypass” would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The 2035 land use plan was on an exhibit displayed at the public meeting. The Alignment Analysis Resource Exhibit, as shown at the public meeting, can be viewed on the project website. You may also refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Preliminary Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following freeway interchange spacing standards. Diamond interchanges are initially proposed to reduce interchange footprint size. Where a standard diamond interchange impacts an environmental resource (e.g., home, public facility, or wetland), other types of interchange configurations such as a split diamond or a three-quadrant partial cloverleaf will be considered if the configuration could avoid or minimize impacts to the resource. For example, the interchange of the existing alignments (124, 125, 126, and 127) with Ireland Grove Road could be made a split diamond to reduce the indirect impacts to homes on the northeast quadrant of the interchange on Kell Avenue in The Grove Subdivision. The type of interchange will be refined in the Environmental Assessment for the recommended alignment.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

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April 6, 2012



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I was disappointed that no figures were quoted on costs of alternatives. Also, no data on how much traffic is on I-74 to Indy. That stretch of 74 is so underutilized. It would be hard to understand how an east bypass would be justified. The east bypass does so little to ease the real need and that's Veteran's Parkway. But that's where people go! & business thrives...it's to be expected. I was the first residence on the east side of Towanda Barnes (2004). I haven't seen any worsening of traffic on Towanda Barnes Road in 7 years. There is virtually no problem w/ congestion even @ State Farm work begin time. This bypass does nothing to get eastside traffic into Bloomington, in fact it would take longer! And so many intersections! That's unjustified with cost, surely. What Bloomington needs is infrastructure, not extrastructure. A total waste of money and land and time in this point of history. Bloomington is "State Farm" and ISU. That's it. It does not have an industrial base that increases semi-traffic. If you want to bypass the east side, then place it east about 2-4 miles and have one intersection on Rt 9. Quit spending so much of our money on something so unjustified now.

Response:

Cost is not a primary criterion for eliminating alternatives during initial alternative evaluation steps. Cost of the remaining alignments will be calculated and used in the comparison of alternatives in the Environmental Assessment Analysis.

Exhibits displaying forecasted Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) have been presented at Public Information Meetings 2 through 4. The maps are downloadable on the project webpage (www.eastsidehighway.com) and they contain projections for I-74 in the southeast corner of the study area. As identified in the project's Purpose and Need, the East Side Highway is being studied to determine a location that will accommodate planned growth and improve access and mobility on the east side. It is not being developed to serve as a bypass. Traffic volume on I-74 east of the project does play into the component of regional mobility, but this is just one element of the project's Purpose and Need.

The year 2035 travel demand modeling performed to date does show some improvement of Veterans Parkway traffic volumes when comparing the 2035 No-Build alternative to the ESH alternatives. However, it is important to note that the Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. Improving congestion on Veterans Parkway, while being a potential benefit of an ESH, is not a primary objective of the study.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

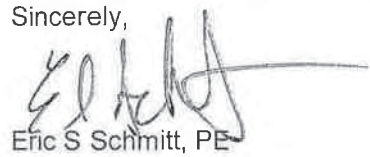
As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I think the method shown at the Jan. 12th to determine the location and type of road to be built is very good.

Please include farmers as a separate group to hear and address their concerns.

Response:

Thank you for your support of the ESH project. Please continue to attend the Public Information Meetings and submit feedback throughout the remainder of the project.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Several local farmers have volunteered to serve on the group. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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I have some comments/concerns regarding the options to the East Side Highway. One of my major concerns is your calculation of only 17 homes "impacted" by these routes. Your definition of "impacted" only includes home within the 250 ft corridor of the Freeway. What about the homes that just outside of the 250 ft. Are they not impacted by noise pollution from the Freeway? I would rather be an impacted homeowner than a homeowner next to one of these 17 as at least they will have their homes purchased. I will be left with a home that is worth less, the constant sounds of a Freeway and if I'm lucky maybe a hotel or gas station built right off the interchange within 0.5 miles from my front door.

With regards to the homeowners of the Grove at Kickapoo Creek Subdivision and students at Benjamin Elementary, is there not the threat of increased crime activity due their being a Freeway exchange so close to those locations. During the information session, the 2035 Land use study and the concern with "leap frog" growth was mentioned as to why the eastern most option was removed. With routing the Freeway to the west of the Grove Subdivision doesn't this create "leap frog" and also isolate the Grove and Benjamin School from the rest of the city. Residents of the Grove have been told there are plans to create trails within the park next to Benjamin School. These trails will have a difficult time connecting to the rest of the city's Constitution Trail System with the Freeway passing between the Grove and the rest of the city of Bloomington.

The reasons given by your representatives as to why the Freeway cannot be east of the Grove Subdivision don't seem to make sense. Putting the Freeway on the west side of the Grove would seem to create instant "leap frog", impact numerous home with increased noise pollution and lessen their property values. This Freeway should be moved farther east and away from Residential areas or not build at all!

Please also include me in your email distribution list.

Response:

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of

undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan. Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

The network of existing and proposed bicycle routes was reviewed as part of the Alignment Analysis to determine the proximity of the routes to the proposed alternative alignments. Alignments further from the network will have reduced opportunities for multimodal use. A representative of the local bicycling community is a member of the Community Working Group (CWG) which serves an advisory role to the project study group. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including bikes) can be maximized through the development of an ESH. Through this FWG, bike and pedestrian paths will continue to be evaluated in conjunction with the ESH as the project continues.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

You will be added to the mailing list. For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012



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Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to voice my concerns about this project.

I am for the 'no build' option. I attended the last public meeting and was surprised to see that the 'no build' option did not get its own section of evaluation within the presentation. I think the public deserves to see the positives of supporting a 'no build' option. We were only presented with the negatives - which results in a biased presentation to the public.

I live in one of the houses located in The Grove subdivision that backs up directly to the site of the proposed highway. My primary concern is the health and safety of the children being raised in these homes as they will have direct exposure to pollutants and noise created by the traffic using the highway. I have included links to a few studies that outline these negative effects and call attention to my concerns. Please cancel the study and save these children from being exposed to toxins and other harmful pollutants.

http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2009/04/12/road_hazard/

**Please note: The proposed eastside highway will be 250 feet from my home.*

**Researchers suspect the health risk from ultrafine particles is greatest downwind and within 300 feet of busy highways. The particles, each thousands of times smaller in diameter than a human hair, are easy to breathe in, and they readily spread throughout people's circulatory systems and enter their brains. On their surfaces, they can carry toxic chemicals and metals.*

<http://www.ehhi.org/reports/exhaust/exhaust06.pdf>

**Studies have found that children in communities with higher levels of urban air pollution in Southern California had decreased lung function growth, and children spending more time outdoors had even larger deficits in the growth rate of lung function.*

- *Even low levels of particulate matter and ozone in ambient air may increase symptoms of asthma in children.*
- *Asthma in children has been associated with proximity to highways and truck traffic near residences and schools.*
- *Studies have found that children in communities with higher levels of urban air pollution have decreased lung function growth rates, and children who spend more time outdoors have even larger deficits.*

*<http://autism.about.com/b/2010/12/17/conclusion-living-near-a-freeway-was-associated-with-autism.htm>
As a result of the recent public presentation, we were told that the option for a freeway is being recommended. If that's the case, can we rename this the 'Eastside Freeway' project in order to appropriately recognize the effort for what it truly will be? I think there is a common misconception that the project is proposing something similar to Veterans Parkway and many citizens are ignoring it completely as a result.*

The proposed highway is not needed at this time due to a slower economy and reduced growth in the area. If this is truly meant to be a bypass, I don't understand why the growth of B/N is a consideration as the citizens of B/N will not be using this bypass on a daily basis. If it's truly meant to be a bypass, then it should be located further to the east, away from any dense areas of homes.

Please cancel this project and ensure the integrity of our safe, clean and quiet eastside neighborhoods.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

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With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The analysis and determination of facility type (arterial, expressway & freeway) was conducted during the most recent phase of the alternative analysis. Throughout the duration of the project, it has been referred to as the East Side Highway. While there have been suggestions in the past to change the name, the East Side Highway is the name that most associate with the project.

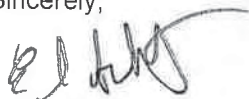
The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



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Comment 1

Please note my disapproval for the potential highway routes. As a resident of The Grove subdivision, this highway will not only destroy our happy, clean, and enjoyable community but it will isolate us from the rest of Bloomington. This highway would destroy the growing community that was to become one of Bloomington's largest. Please reconsider your routing of the highway near our homes and contemplate an alternative that does not destroy small residential communities. There is plenty of farmland available to move the road away from homes and businesses surrounding Towanda-Barnes Road. There are many options available in open farmland and there is no need for a highway to be placed next to a residential subdivision, school, and creek system.

Comment 2

I am interested in more information on the projected usage of the highway by residents of the city of Bloomington and other local travel versus interstate and commercial midwest travel. This highway is being presented as a solution to growth and congestion issues for the city but looks to be an alternative expressway route and no longer a local roadway. Thank you.

Comment 3

I do not agree with the information presented on V/C ratio for travel within the city of Bloomington. An expressway connecting two interstates will not have an impact on local travel within the city. The need for more East-West travel in the city will not be altered by a North-South highway on the East-Side. The same East-West routes that are traveled now will be the same roads used for ramps on the highway. If you know how traffic flows in this city, you would understand that no one gets on the expressway to get across town. The ramps will increase your V/C ratios on East-West travel through the major roads. Also, the V/C ratios on Towanda-Barnes road cannot be accurate because there is never traffic on this four-lane road with a speed limit of 55. The Towanda-Barnes road already serves as a North-South connection for the city and it is barely utilized. This highway project seems to be another unnecessary

"bridge to nowhere" that other communities have faced. We will fight to get logical solutions to future problems and save our tax dollars for proper use.

Comment 4

How is this project going to be financed? In a bankrupt state and indebted nation, is building a highway that is not needed the best use of funds? Why are we not looking for more productive uses of these funds?

Response:

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

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The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S Schmitt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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I am a resident of the Grove and I am against the construction of the east side highway. There are a number of reasons that I feel this way. Not only do I believe that the highway isn't necessary and that our federal and state dollars could be put to better use in other areas, but I also believe that it will stunt the growth and expansion of the subdivisions on the east side of Bloomington. If a highway is built, this will drive already low property values even lower. The east side of Bloomington has been expanding and if a highway project goes into place, the growth will stop. I encourage whoever will end up reading this email to start listening to the citizens of Bloomington and think twice about putting in a highway that isn't for us and more for interstate travelers

Response:

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Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear 

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Comment 1

I am resident at "The grove neighborhood"

I do have concern about Eastside highway presented at the meeting on 1/11/2012.

- 1) Safety of children at residence closer to Highway*
- 2) Very high noise pollution due to Highway traffic*
- 3) Benjamin school is also very near to proposed highway - Safety of children as well as impact on school environment.*
- 4) Increased traffic of Trucks, semi trucks and other vehicles near residence area*
- 5) Very limited use of proposed high way by "The Grove Residents".*
- 6) East side projections by project team need to be revisited and it may not be correct.*
- 7) Can Proposed highway or subroad from "NORTH-SOUTH" can be developed after EAST OF BENJAMIN SCHOOL ?*

Comment 2

- 1.) Eastside Highway impact "The Grove" neighborhood.*
- 2.) It will create high noise level.*
- 3.) It will increase commercial vehicle traffic.*
- 4.) It will have concern about safety of kids & family.*
- 5.) It will impact property value which is just built in last 3-6 years.*
- 6.) The use of highway for our residents will be limited.*
- 7.) Propose to move Eastside Highway about 1 mile east of Benjamin School.*

Response:

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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As a resident of The Grove, you can add my name to the list of people who oppose the current eastside highway plans. My concerns are several.

I am not convinced, for example, that the population projections used by the eastside highway study group are realistic. These population projections are a critical element of the perceived need to construct a highway. They are perhaps THE critical element. However, as noted by Clark-Dietz in the public hearings last week, the population estimates have been revised several times over the last few years, and these revisions have always resulted in lower population estimates with each subsequent revision. There is no reason to believe that current projections will not be revised downwards in the future as well and as such, the projections are not compelling evidence that a highway is needed.

Other concerns I have –

- The danger that an interchange on Ireland Grove Road immediately west of our subdivision will pose to the children of The Grove.*
- The noise of interstate traffic so close to The Grove negatively affecting the quality of life in our subdivision.*
- An increase in Ireland Grove Road truck traffic that an interstate would cause in and around The Grove, and therefore increased wear and tear on the roads, and increased road maintenance and construction costs for the city and county.*
- Rezoning of land from farm to commercial use in and near the highway, and the "sudden" appearance of commercial enterprises in and around the interstate, and very near The Grove.*
- A decrease in property values in our subdivision due to all of the concerns listed above.*
- Statements by Clark-Dietz in last week's public presentation that public comments placed on the www.eastsidehighway.com website will be "summarized" (read: edited, perhaps deleted, and then "summarized") before they are sent to governmental entities for subsequent phases of the project.*

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

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The verbatim public comments were provided in writing to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). No omissions, deletions, or revisions were made to the public comments. The public comments and responses will also be posted to the project website for public viewing. Due to time constraints, a summary of the comments were presented to the State and Federal resource agencies at the March 2012 coordination meeting. The presentation made to the resource agencies is made available to the public on the project website.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



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To whom it may concern,

I have several concerns regarding the development of an East Side Highway at the locations currently proposed:

- The current alternatives are very near east side neighborhoods. Considering the extremely close proximity, an interstate-type highway will increase child safety concerns, crime potential, noise pollution, and decrease property values for the neighborhoods in Towanda, Eagle View, and The Grove. Homes could be as close as ~350 feet from the new highway.*
- The population and traffic growth estimates seem aggressive considering the current growth plans for businesses in Bloomington-Normal. Even if growth met estimates, wouldn't a non-Interstate type road (i.e. another Towanda Barnes) alleviate traffic congestion and provide for both residential and commercial friendly development? An Interstate would choke future residential growth to the east.*
- The Bloomington-Normal road system currently has major north/south routes spaced every 1.75-2.50 miles apart (I-55/74, Main Street, Veterans Parkway, Towanda Barnes Road). It seems that this pattern has worked well for the city. That would imply that the next north/south route should be 1.75-2.50 miles east of Towanda Barnes Road, much further than the current alternatives.*
- The decline in property values of several neighborhoods due to an interstate highway could harm property tax revenues that contribute to school budgets and road maintenance.*
- Some would use an east side interstate to bypass B-N rather than using the west side route of 55/74 to travel from the Towanda area to the Downs area. By my estimates, an east side interstate would only shave ~7 miles off the west side route. This equate to about 6 minutes of saved travel time. Is a project of this mammoth size a responsible use of federal, state, or local tax money with such minimal benefit?*

- *The budgets of all levels of government will likely be strained for years, if not decades to come. This type of project is not the best use of government spending.*

When my family chose to build a new house in the Eagle View neighborhood, we were looking for a quiet, child friendly, safe neighborhood to build our "dream" house that we could raise our children in. Now that we have a young child, our increased need for the neighborhood to remain safe and family friendly is a top concern. We love living in this neighborhood as it is close to work, daycare, parks, etc. I would have never imagined us building our home here if we knew there was the potential for an interstate running through our backyard. I am not in favor of the current proposed alternatives nor the type of road proposed. Thank you for your time.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

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Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The

proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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April 6, 2012



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Comment 1

I am a resident of Eagle View. I am opposed to the current alternatives for these reasons:

I feel they would pass too close to the Eastside subdivisions of Eagle View, The Grove and Harvest Pointe. They would negatively impact the value, noise level, air quality and overall livability of these neighborhoods (and future neighborhoods that may be built in the near future.)

The alternatives currently do not adequately address the issues of East-West travel.

I am not convinced of the necessity of a venture of this magnitude. I would recommend deferring a decision until the projections and prognostications develop further.

I do not believe the cost expenditure is warranted at this time. Current freeway routes are adequate for the near future.

I am willing and able to participate in any of the Focus Work Groups that need assistance.

Comment 2

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] I reside in Eagle View on the Eastside of Bloomington.

I am a construction cost consultant for the hospitality and commercial retail markets, specializing in catastrophic property losses.

I would like to volunteer to assist with any of the three focus work groups.

Response:

While in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than several of the other eliminated alignments, the remaining alignments have passed four levels of increasingly detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. They contain no unrealistic or non-feasible alternatives.
2. They are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project; these alignments were found to best provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will help to accommodate projected traffic increases from the development.
3. They have fewer "direct" impacts on existing homes (i.e., acquisitions) and fewer acres of farmland removed from production than alignments which were eliminated.
4. They have fewer impacts to primary agricultural land, are less likely to encourage development inconsistent with the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, do not cross the main branch of the Kickapoo Creek, and are closer to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes than alignments which were eliminated.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

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With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

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The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

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As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Thank you for volunteering to serve on the Focus Working Group (FWG). The project team will contact you with details.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



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Concerns, possible noise and lowering of property value.

Response:

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

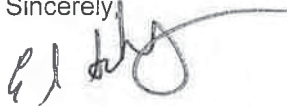
Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased

accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

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I am writing in opposition of the proposed East Side Highway. I was one of the early residents of the Grove subdivision. My wife and I chose to build in this neighborhood, because we liked the quiet location with relatively little traffic coming by our subdivision, the rural atmosphere of the location, the future nature park, the commitment to the restoration of the Kickapoo Creek and associated land, and because of the commitment to build a new elementary school near the neighborhood. I have significant concerns about the proposed East Side Highway, including the following:

- Increased home security safety concerns for any neighborhoods located near the expressway's intersection due to the easy on/off access to the interstates for quick getaways.*
- Increased safety concerns for parental and school bus traffic to the Benjamin Elementary and Cornerstone Christian Academy due to increased traffic at the freeway exits/entrances as well as the freeway itself.*
- Noise level of highway traffic in close proximity to residential areas*
- Lower property values and limited resale value in all affected subdivisions*
- Uncertainty for zoning of land adjacent to the expressway. If it is zoned commercial, than further loss of residential property values, increased safety concerns, increase noise and air pollution, etc.*
- Concerns that the 'population and growth' reasons for the expressway are no longer valid and no substantial new subdivision growth has occurred over that last few years and the presentation shown at the 01/12/12 meeting was starting at 2005 with projections that are no longer accurate or are (at best) questionable.*
- The future limited use by residents in day to day travel*
- Use of the freeway as a bypass by semi-trucks and other commercial traffic that will take away business from the current West-side businesses that depend on I-55 and I-74 traffic causing economic loss and hurt West-side redevelopment efforts.*
- The impact to the Kickapoo Creak restoration effort through additional run-off and potential pollution*

- *Increased water runoff concerns to the Randolph Township Sewage treatment plant as more farmland east side of Towanda Barnes is taken out of use. The impact to the treatment facility would be even more impacted if commercial development is allowed to use this same facility. Many dollars would be required to be paid potentially all city and county residents should this occur.*
- *Increased commercial zoning along the freeway, resulting in significant truck traffic exiting onto Ireland Grove, Route 9, G.E. and Ft. Jesse roads. This will result in more frequent and costly road repairs which local government cannot afford.*
- *Increased traffic congestion on those intersecting roads*
- *Freeway traffic exiting at a high speed and coming upon slow moving farm equipment that travel along Towanda Barnes and Ireland Grove, Route 9, G.E. and Ft. Jesse roads is hazardous.*
- *Concern that Millions of dollars will be spent by the taxpayers of Illinois at a time our State cannot pay our bills or fund the obligations we have to our state employees, when the reasons for the expressway are suspect and if built would benefit the 'few'.*
- *Concern that any summarization of the many comments would not reflect our serious concerns.*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and to express my concerns and urge a 'No-Build' option.

Response:

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility

will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Assessment cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction.

Roadway runoff will be assessed in the Environmental Assessment Analysis.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The design criteria used for overpasses or underpasses at crossroads will make allowances for the height and width of farm implements. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm implement issues. It is important to note, however, that slow moving farm vehicles would be prohibited from accessing the ESH due to safety reasons.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

At this time, it has not been determined which agency will have jurisdiction over the ESH and therefore, responsible for standard roadway maintenance.

The verbatim public comments will be provided in writing to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). No omissions, deletions, or revisions will be made to the public comments. The public comments and responses will also be posted to the project website for public viewing. Due to time constraints, a summary of the comments will be presented to the State and Federal resource agencies at the March

2012 coordination meeting. The presentation made to the resource agencies is available to the public on the project website.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S Schmitt', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I think the money and time going into this on a federal level is ridiculous and criminal. There is no reason for a bypass anywhere in this town. Towanda-Barnes serves this purpose well. I did not move into the Grove at Kickapoo knowing there would be a highway running right next to it and I never would have if I had known. This will be nothing but bad for business that depend on that traffic coming in since it will now bypass them. I DO NOT want the pollution, noise, or decrease in property value. Time should be spent figuring out how to pay bills and getting out of debt, not WASTING time and money on a useless project.

Response:

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

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The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

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Seeing map of on & off ramps to road 1750 E makes no sense to me. This interchange is not useful the way it is set up. You get off 74 going east to Road 1750 E going south to where? It would also eliminate more farmland & houses for owners that was lost when 74 was first established. On our land we would have a piece that would be land locked, no way to get to it. This makes no sense. I am sure there is some other way to establish this route from 74 to 55. Do you go from Route 55 to 74 to go east on 74?

Response:

As the project moves forward, interchange geometry will continue to be refined to address access needs and minimize impacts. The configurations presented at the fourth Public Information Meeting were preliminary.

The number of homes displaced was a criterion considered during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high impact to residences were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes displaced or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality, will remain a criterion of comparison throughout the Environmental Assessment. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the Environmental Assessment; but all resources impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible. The preferred alternative is typically the alternative that results in the least environmental and community impacts among the alternatives considered.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

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We do not seriously buy into all the data that was presented concerning population growth in the area. State Farm is not actively building. ISU and Country Financial are not building. We will be lucky to maintain the one Mitsubishi plant we have now let alone add another one as mentioned. There has been such an effort to build the west side where the I55/Route 9 junction is located. Why in the world destroy it. The results have been spotty at best – look at the outlet mall. We would like to see the Towanda Barnes road 4 lanes in its entirety. Then reassess if an Eastside bypass is really needed.

Response:

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an “area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades.” It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA’s. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

After reviewing the provided material and listening to the impacted people my vote for the proposed by-pass is NO BUILD. The reason for this includes the growth projections are too aggressive as the insurance industry (State Farm) is stagnant in terms of growth and the contracted employees that State Farm hired are being eliminated: Any growth by state Farm will be added in the zones through centralization opposed to Bloomington. Any other industry growth like car manufacturing etc is west side activity and as such eliminates the need for the by-pass, as the by-pass wouldn't be used if this growth were to occur.

If the by-pass continues the best route is one that follows CR 2000 or the further east option. The definition of impacted residents needs to be reviewed as the current definition relayed at the meeting on 1/11/2012 lacks any reasonable assessment of common sense and is blind denial. No resident wants to live or would have purchased a residence 800 feet from a by-pass. Those residents are truly impacted. The CR 2000 option already has an existing road and impacted farmland. Approving this route as the by-pass is a road-widening project and has less resident impact to the Grove, Eagleview and Harvest Point. This alternative also allows the city of Bloomington the opportunity to better plan, zone and control the East Side growth opposed to sticking it to the residents of the existing sub-divisions. There needs to be much more consideration made to the impact to EXISTING residents of all the alternatives and the definition of who is truly impacted needs to coincide with property values, crime, and noise and air pollution impacts.

Lastly the overall route of the by-pass makes no sense. People entering the by-pass from 39 are then going east, then south, then west then southeast on 74. This creates several miles driven in inefficiency and waste. People coming from Southbound 55 have it even worse. Then would be going back east, then south, then west then southeast on 74. This creates even much greater inefficiency and waste. In both cases continuing to 74 does not significantly impact the mileage driven nor the time traveled. This current route also continues to provide the existing businesses along this route economic opportunity where the proposed bypass taking this opportunity away.

I am not opposed to reasonable and beneficial growth and change however the options provided and the outlined need for the by-pass do not justify the expense or impact to all parties involved.

As stated at the beginning of this response I have a 100% NO BUILD position.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The alignments remaining under consideration follow CR 2000 E north of GE Road.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed

abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.


Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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After reviewing and considering the proposal for and eastside highway and the impacts to people my vote for the proposed by-pass is NO BUILD. The reason for this includes the growth projections are too aggressive as the insurance industry (State Farm) is stagnant in terms of growth and the contracted employees that State Farm hired are being eliminated. Any growth by State Farm will be added in their zones locations through centralization.

If an Eastside highway continues to be an option, the best route is one that follows CR 2000 or a further east option. The definition of impacted residents needs to be reviewed as the current definition relayed at the meeting on 1/11/2012 lacks any reasonable assessment of common sense and is blind denial. No resident wants to live or would have purchased a residence 800 feet from a highway. Those residents are truly impacted. They will see an increase in noise and air pollution along with increase in crime to the area and decrease in property values: Realistically who want to by a home close to a highway? Retaining walls built to block noise are not attractive to the current or future homeowners. Who wants to look at a highway or listen to the noise or breath in the pollutants?

The CR 2000 option already has an existing road and impacted farmland. Approving this route as the route for the highway by-pass is a road-widening project and appears to impact fewer residence of the Grove, Eagleview and Harvest Point neighborhoods. This alternative also allows the City of Bloomington the opportunity to better plan, zone and control the East Side growth opposed to sticking it to the residents of the existing sub-divisions. There needs to be more consideration given to the impact of EXISTING residents of all the alternatives and the definition of who is truly impacted needs to be considered along with how this truly, realistically impacts the decline property values of the homes in these neighborhoods. The air and noise pollution exposure to residence or future residents needs to be fully evaluated and considered. How a highway next to residential housing will be impacted by crime. We don't need the eastside of Bloomington to mirror the westside of Bloomington.

As stated at the beginning of this response I have a 100% NO BUILD position.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The alignments remaining under consideration follow CR 2000 E north of GE Road.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

Visual impacts will be assessed during the Environmental Assessment Analysis and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) has been formed. Landscaping and aesthetics will be discussed with the group.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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Comments intended for Towanda-Barnes Rd. improvement.

It would behoove the committee to investigate Austin, TX's method of dealing with a highway (I-35) that offers a direct road plus a arterial road – all combined into one. The highway becomes divided into an upper level (the bypass, direct road) and a lower level for access to side roads & businesses. There are planned ramps at various distances for access to the lower level. Signage is very important. It works.

The main advantage to this stacked highway is that no new land is sacrificed.

I propose that this type would prevent more loss of farmland and urban sprawl.

Response:

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and

The only north/south arterial within the project study area where an elevated freeway could potentially be constructed would be over Towanda Barnes Road. There are three factors as to why such a facility would not move forward in the analysis. First, an elevated structure at this location would likely violate vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA). Second, while cost is not generally a criterion of consideration during preliminary alternative analysis, excessive cost can be used to screen alternatives if less costly alternatives exist that better meet the project's Purpose and Need. An elevated freeway would be extremely expensive in comparison to the other alternatives being considered. Third, as previously mentioned, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated due to the number of residential properties impacted.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

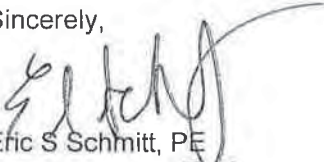
An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I'm writing in regard to the proposed eastside roadway. This roadway will block 135 acres, 2 homes, and 3 barns on our centennial farm. This farm has been in our family for 150 yrs. The address of the Bozarth Farm is at 1750 East Road, Blm. My understanding this also effects and blocks 5 other properties. These properties are in section 25, 26, 35 & 36 in Bloomington Township, and are on the east & west side of Road 1750 and will totally be blocked to access. The Bozarth Farm lost access to our property and land when route 74 was built. We have a blacktop lane over 1 mile long which is our only access. Your proposal D2 on map from Route 150 – Route 74 to my understanding would not be user friendly, will have limited entrance and exits. We ask that you would reconsider this option and not destroy our family farm. Thank you.

Response:

The project team understands the emotional ties that people have to their homes, especially if those homes have been in the family for multiple generations. Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section D-1 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to disproportionately high impacts to residences.
- Section D-3 was eliminated during the Macro Analysis because of the skewed curve it contained and because it offered no advantages over Section D-2. Skews are points of intersection at angles less than 90° that present safety issues.
- Section D-4 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis because of its skewed crossing of Towanda-Barnes Road and US 150.
- Section D-5 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 6, 2012



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Comments on the East Side Highway Planning Process and proposed roadway facility.

As the evaluation planning process for the East Side Highway has proceeded, I have become increasingly concerned with the decisions being made, in particular to build the East Side Highway at all and the decision that it be a freeway. I do support one aspect of the proposal -that is, to build an overpass over 155 to connect Northtown Rd. on both sides of 155, if it is a simple four-lane road -not a freeway.

The need for an East Side Highway has been driven by the population projections by the McLean County Planning Commission in 2009 of 234,280 persons in McLean County by 2030, starting with the 2000 census population. While these were carefully prepared, they were based on the rapid growth of McLean County in the 1980s and 1990s; from these projections, expected land use, particularly on the east side of Bloomington-Normal, was derived, assuming that development patterns would continue pretty much as they have in the past with ever decreasing residential densities, extending recent patterns of sprawl on the outskirts of Bloomington-Normal. The Urban Area of Bloomington-Normal given in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (2009), cited often as the rationale for the East Side Highway, is based on these population projections and assumptions of settlement densities.

As the planners for the East Side Highway have acknowledged, the actual McLean County census population in 2010 (169,572) was considerably less than that projected (178, 31 0), a difference of 8,738. The actual rate of population growth between 2000 and 2010 is 12.7 percent compared to the projected 18.5 percent. That is a significant difference, especially if continued to 2035. While the recent population projection used for the East-Side Highway acknowledges this slower population growth for the county between 2000 and 2010, it still assumes population will continue rapidly in the future, despite the considerable slow down in population growth in the first decade of the 21st century. Even population growth in Bloomington City, Bloomington, Towanda, and Old Town Townships-the townships surrounding the proposed East Side Highway - grew much more slowly between 2000 and 2010 (16.2 percent) than

and precious homes and cutting off people from one another, is not the answer, nor a wise use of precious resources or response to the changing availability of energy we are all facing.

Response:

Your comment regarding Northtown Road has been noted. Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

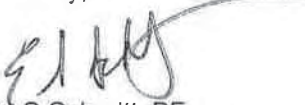
A stand-alone Transit Alternative was evaluated for its effectiveness to meet the Purpose and Need Statement of the project. Several modes of bus transit and light rail (including streetcar/trolley) were considered. The Bloomington-Normal urbanized area year 2035 population and employment densities were reviewed in evaluating the appropriate transit mode to serve the area. Given the population density thresholds, Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services would likely be the best fit for the project study area. Premium transit modes such as Light Rail Transit are not recommended because the projected population density will not support them.

Given that the system wide ridership for all of Bloomington-Normal is less than 5,000 trips per day with 11 fixed routes, the implementation of Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services as a stand-alone alternative would not meet the unmet demand of over 50,000 trips per day within the study area. Unmet demand is defined as the amount of volume reduction required on the failing road in relation to the capacity of the road. However, transit may provide merits as a supplement to the ESH improvements being considered for the project and will be further evaluated as alignments are refined and design progresses. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including transit) can be maximized through the development of an ESH.

The network of existing and proposed bicycle routes was reviewed as part of the Alignment Analysis to determine the proximity of the routes to the proposed alternative alignments. Alignments further from the network will have reduced opportunities for multimodal use. A representative of the local bicycling community is a member of the Community Working Group (CWG) which serves an advisory role to the project study group. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including bikes) can be maximized through the development of an ESH. Through this FWG, bike and pedestrian paths will continue to be evaluated in conjunction with the ESH as the project continues

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

The last east-most alternative that was eliminated was eliminated because the "planning" area on the east side is too small – i.e. too much "unplanned" area would be contained within it. I cannot believe that 25 years from now, all of this "unplanned" area will still be unplanned. We will end up with an interstate running right through the middle of our city. That is crazy. The east-most route that was last removed is the only route that any people have ever supported in any way. No one – to a person – has ever told me that we even need a new east side interstate highway. Stop the project now! The process does not let us know that our input is making any difference. I serve on one of the working groups and I don't feel I am being listened to. This plan is too short sighted. Stop the work now, or move it much further east.

Response:

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The adopted 2035 Land Use Plan, as prepared by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC), can be found in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html). Land use is discussed in Chapter 7.

The Community Working Group (CWG) is formed as part of the Context Sensitive Solutions process. A consensus of CWG concurrence is sought prior to project decision. Consensus is defined as a majority of stakeholders in agreement with the minority agreeing that their input was duly considered. The joint lead agencies and the PSG will fully consider all CWG input when making project decisions. While it is not always reasonable to assume all CWG members will be in agreement, CWG consensus was achieved on the major project milestones (purpose and need, range of alternatives, facility type) as discussed at the

CWG meetings. The project team does acknowledge that not all CWG members are in agreement on every project decision, but the project team did consider all input.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
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Process: I am not in agreement with the alternatives selected. I remain firm in my opinion that if any facility is to be constructed in the future, that said facility should be much farther to the east.

Alignments: The alignment at the North (Towanda) appears much too complicated. To the south at I74 the access again is too far to the west to be of any real benefit to the town of Downs.

Type: In my opinion this proposed facility should not be built to Interstate standards. My reason for taking this position is driven by the fact that the eastside public has repeatedly indicated they also need better east-west travel options. This facility will not accomplish that need. Also this highway will pass through highly productive and level farmland. (approx 800 acres or more) I do not believe this is a good trade-off for what it will accomplish. In these days of ever increasing population at home and abroad, we need to respect the very valuable agricultural resources we have.

Response:

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

Engineering considerations including interchange complexity was considered during the evaluation process. Several proposed interchanges were eliminated due to highly complex interchange configurations that result in a less safe and more costly option. The remaining alignments are feasible from an engineering perspective. Alignments and interchanges will be refined during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will

be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I would like to offer the following comments regarding the proposed road south interchange of the eastside bypass:

- 1. The Bozarth Farm is a centennial farm.*
- 2. The main house is 150 yrs. old & the 2nd house 80 yrs. old.*
- 3. This road would block access to 135 acres of farmland, as well as access to the aforementioned homes.*
- 4. There are alternatives that would be less intrusive for these family homes & farms on the south end of this proposal.*

Thank you for your consideration regarding these comments.

Response:

Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section D-1 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to disproportionately high impacts to residences.
- Section D-3 was eliminated during the Macro Analysis because of the skewed curve it contained and because it offered no advantages over Section D-2. Skews are points of intersection at angles less than 90° that present safety issues.
- Section D-4 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis because of its skewed crossing of Towanda-Barnes Road and US 150.
- Section D-5 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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- *The remaining alignments are inside the line of new development –example- Grove subdivision, Benjamin School, & Christian Academy.*
- *The remaining alignments are extraordinarily close to the existing four lane Towanda Barnes.*
- *The new alignments do not use existing roads, thus making them more expensive for the tax payer & wasting valuable farm land.*
- *The access of East/West roads is needing updating now.*
- *The bypass should truly bypass the development of Bloomington's east side – what you have planned cuts it in half – it is already outdated.*
- *A four lane road similar to Towanda/Barnes located at least 3 or 4 miles east of Towanda/Barnes Road would be a better choice for the already developing east side of Bloomington.*
- *Will you actually read and seriously consider these comments???*

Response:

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

Several alternatives that utilize a portion of existing roads, including Towanda Barnes Road, CR 2000 E and CR 2100 E, were evaluated and included in the alternative analysis evaluation. Alternatives that utilize Towanda Barnes Road and CR 2100 E were eliminated during the alternative analysis process due to disproportionately high environmental and/or community impacts.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

All public comments received during the course of the project are read, considered and responded to. The comments are also forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration and will be published in the Environmental Assessment document.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S Schmitt', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



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Proposal D2 is not supported. It cuts across 6 parcels of land by I-74 and will make parcels blocked from access. It also will eliminate 3 farmsteads.

No build option is the best. If a road is built, options D4 or S2M are more farm friendly routes.

Response:

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section D-1 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to disproportionately high impacts to residences.
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- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

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April 5, 2012



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Comment 1

I urge you to use the No-Build option!

Both the 2 proposed options would greatly deteriorate the quality of life for east side residents. Property values would drop significantly. The interchange on Ft. Jesse is just a short 350' from the Eagle View Estates Subdivision.

I anticipate this freeway would accommodate semis going to and from Chicago to the 75 interstate. This traffic would be present at all hours of the night. Bloomington-Normal is known as being a city with the shortest commute times to work (as reported by CNN). Therefore I sincerely doubt people will be using this proposed freeway to get to work.

I also am extremely concerned at the unnecessary taking of valuable farm land.

In addition, I found your website FAQs were biased, and the representatives in the entryway at this meeting were extremely close-minded.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build

alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

While in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than several of the other eliminated alignments, the remaining alignments have passed four levels of increasingly detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. They contain no unrealistic or non-feasible alternatives.
2. They are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project; these alignments were found to best provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will help to accommodate projected traffic increases from the development.
3. They have fewer "direct" impacts on existing homes (i.e., acquisitions) and fewer acres of farmland removed from production than alignments which were eliminated.
4. They have fewer impacts to primary agricultural land, are less likely to encourage development inconsistent with the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, do not cross the main branch of the Kickapoo Creek, and are closer to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes than alignments which were eliminated.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning.

If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The project website contains a section on frequently asked questions. The responses are based upon factual information. The personnel involved in conducting the ESH Environmental Assessment are objective professional engineers, scientists, and planners. Public input and opinion is welcomed and considered throughout the ESH project. The project team's replies to inquiries are based on the factual findings of the study. The ESH follows the basic principles of the Context Sensitive Solutions process. The Context Sensitive Solutions Policy for Illinois can be found in the IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment Manual (Chapter 19) available on the IDOT website: <http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/bdmanual.html>

Comment 2

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to urge you to support the "NO-BUILD" option for the Bloomington-Normal east-side highway. I recently attended an east-side highway public meeting (1/12/12) where it was standing room only in the Normal Community High School Auditorium. It did not take very long to realize that those seating/standing around me were very much opposed to the building this freeway as much as I was. I was encouraged to see how many people felt it necessary to voice their concerns and make attendance to this meeting a top priority. The presentation was conducted by the East Side Highway Environmental Assessment (ESHEA). To illustrate how much community interest there is regarding this proposed freeway, ESHEA commented that the interactive map on their website had crashed due to a high volume of people trying to access it.

Both proposed freeways are located very close to multiple neighborhoods. One freeway interchange is located a mere 350' from the Eagle View Estates subdivision and the nearby Eagle View subdivision. The Eagle View South subdivision is located only 850' from the freeway. The proposed freeway actually runs through the Harvest Pointe subdivision. Another neighborhood, the Grove subdivision, is also negatively impacted as the freeway is just 240' away; with the off ramp being only 60' away! It probably would have been more informative to the public if the ESHEA had included some actual measurements in their presentation (even if preliminary); however, these distances were obtained on a separate day after our Alderman requested them from ESHEA. I would like to thank Alderman Jim Fruin for his diligence on getting information to us regarding this proposal. I am not as familiar with the neighborhoods south of Ireland Grove – but it is my understanding that they would be impacted as well, including the removal of several homes and a recently built church. In addition, several long standing family farms will be forced to give up their land to the government. My neighbors and my family are extremely apprehensive about having a major freeway in such close proximity to where we live. In all probability, this would become the preferred route for semi-tractor trailers and cars traveling to/from Chicago to/from I74E. This constant traffic would undoubtedly continue even through the night. Excessive road noise, especially from this type of road with a higher operating speed, and increased air pollution emissions would greatly disrupt the

quality of life for many east side residents.

Currently Bloomington-Normal can easily be bypassed by using the interstates and highways on the north, south and west sides of the cities. Proposing to build an unnecessary east side bypass could be considered fiscally irresponsible when considering the large cost to taxpayers in an already financially-broke state.

At this meeting, we were shown in a colorful power-point presentation and maps, that this freeway was needed because of growth that could happen by 2035 (24 years from now). However the map illustrating growth had a starting date of 2005. Since we are currently in 2012, this map is already almost 7 years behind that date. This seems important to note, since new residential construction was very prominent in Bloomington-Normal during 2005. Since then, the housing bubble has burst and we currently do not see the residential construction that we saw back then. Most of the east side subdivisions weren't even started until 2004/2005. Several points of information in ESHEA's PowerPoint presentation and maps didn't really seem to portray an accurate picture. It seemed that information had been skewed in order to obtain the results that would justify the building of the interstate. I discussed some of my concerns with the ESHEA "representatives" at the public meeting. I found them to be very biased and closed-minded. I left the meeting very discouraged and frustrated that night. I am not sure why the public was even invited – maybe just to make it look good on paper.

Currently, there are no planned subdivisions to the east of the three Eagle View subdivisions. If this highway is built, I wouldn't expect there would be future residential growth in this area either, as few people are going to want to build/buy their home right next to an interstate. In addition, this would reduce the property values of the existing homes in this area, and result in reduced property revenue for Bloomington.

A plan for a park just east of Eagle View South has already been drawn up and is included in Bloomington's Parks Master Plan. I am not sure what possible restrictions there might be with having a major freeway so close to a public park, as it was not addressed in ESHEA's presentation, nor was the future park marked on any of their maps. I wonder if they are aware that it is in the city's future plans. If a freeway is built, it would be located directly adjacent to this park where children will play and families gather. My concern is for their safety along with the effects of excessive noise and pollutants.

I, along with many Bloomington-Normal residents, strongly oppose the building of this freeway. We view it as unnecessary and problematic. That is why we stood shoulder-to-shoulder to voice our concerns at the public meeting.

Please help us support the "NO-BUILD" option for the east-side highway.

Thank you for your consideration on this very important matter.

Response:

Please see response to comment 1 above.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that

the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced was a criterion considered during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high impact to residences were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), will remain a criterion of comparison throughout the Environmental Assessment. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the Environmental Assessment; but all resources impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a Freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the next stage of analysis, the Environmental Assessment Analysis. There are guidelines established in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – Title 23 – Highways, which address constructive impacts to parks. A constructive impact is a not a direct physical impact, but an impact resultant of adjacent or nearby construction. An example of a constructive impact would be noise. If there is a decibel threshold that is exceeded, or a decibel change that is considered excessive based upon the receptor definition (in

this case, a "park"), then mitigation might be required. Although the park doesn't currently exist, it has been platted. The project team will assume development of the property as a park in the analysis.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

Comment 3

FYI -

Dear Elected Officials,

I am writing to urge you to support the "NO-BUILD" option for the Bloomington-Normal east-side highway.

I recently attended an east-side highway public meeting (1/12/12) where it was standing room only in the Normal Community High School Auditorium. It did not take very long to realize that those seating/standing around me were very much opposed to the building this freeway as much as I was. I was encouraged to see how many people felt it necessary to voice their concerns and make attendance to this meeting a top priority. The presentation was conducted by the East Side Highway Environmental Assessment (ESHEA). To illustrate how much community interest there is regarding this proposed freeway, ESHEA commented that the interactive map on their website had crashed due to a high volume of people trying to access it.

Both proposed freeways are located very close to multiple neighborhoods. One freeway interchange is located a mere 350' from the Eagle View Estates subdivision and the nearby Eagle View subdivision. The Eagle View South subdivision is located only 850' from the freeway. The proposed freeway actually runs through the Harvest Pointe subdivision. Another neighborhood, the Grove subdivision, is also negatively impacted as the freeway is just 240' away; with the off ramp being only 60' away! It probably would have been more informative to the public if the ESHEA had included some actual measurements in their presentation (even if preliminary); however, these distances were obtained on a separate day after our Alderman requested them from ESHEA. I would like to thank Alderman Jim Fruin for his diligence on getting information to us regarding this proposal. I am not as familiar with the neighborhoods south of Ireland Grove – but it is my understanding that they would be impacted as well, including the removal of several homes and a recently built church. In addition, several long standing family farms will be forced to give up their land to the government.

My neighbors and my family are extremely apprehensive about having a major freeway in such close proximity to where we live. In all probability, this would become the preferred route for semi-tractor trailers and cars traveling to/from Chicago to/from I74E. This constant traffic would undoubtedly continue even through the night. Excessive road noise, especially from this type of road with a higher operating speed, and increased air pollution emissions would greatly disrupt the quality of life for many east side residents.

Currently Bloomington-Normal can easily be bypassed by using the interstates and highways on the north, south and west sides of the cities. Proposing to build an unnecessary east side bypass could be considered fiscally irresponsible when considering the large cost to taxpayers in an already financially-strapped state.

At this meeting, we were shown in a colorful power-point presentation and maps, that this freeway was needed because of growth that could happen by 2035 (24 years from now). However the map illustrating growth had a starting date of 2005. Since we are currently in 2012, this map is already almost 7 years behind that date. This seems important to note, since new residential construction was very prominent in Bloomington-Normal during 2005. Since then, the housing bubble has burst and we currently do not see the residential construction that we saw back then. Most of the east side subdivisions weren't even started until 2004/2005. Several points of information in ESHEA's PowerPoint presentation and maps didn't really seem to portray an accurate picture. It seemed that information had been skewed in order to obtain the results that would justify the building of the interstate. I discussed some of my concerns with the ESHEA "representatives" at the public meeting. I found them to be very biased and closed-minded. I left the meeting very discouraged and frustrated that night. I am not sure why the public was even invited – maybe just to make it look good on paper.

Currently, there are no planned subdivisions to the east of the three Eagle View subdivisions. If this highway is built, I wouldn't expect there would be future residential growth in this area either, as few people are going to want to build/buy their home right next to an interstate. In addition, this would reduce the property values of the existing homes in this area, and result in reduced property revenue for Bloomington & McLean County.

A plan for a park just east of Eagle View South has already been drawn up and is included in Bloomington's Parks Master Plan. I am not sure what possible restrictions there might be with having a major freeway so close to a public park, as it was not addressed in ESHEA's presentation, nor was the future park marked on any of their maps. I wonder if they are aware that it is in the city's future plans. If a freeway is built, it would be located directly adjacent to this park where children will play and families gather. My concern is for their safety along with the effects of excessive noise and pollutants.

I, along with many Bloomington-Normal residents, strongly oppose the building of this freeway. We view it as unnecessary and problematic. That is why we stood shoulder-to-shoulder to voice our concerns at the public meeting.

Please help us support the "NO-BUILD" option for the east-side highway.

Thank you for your consideration on this very important matter. Please distribute this email as considered necessary.

Response:

Please see responses to comment 1 and comment 2 above.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

NO BUILD is the best option. I live on the west edge of the Grove subdivision and do not want a highway behind my house for these reasons: 1) We moved there because it is quiet. 2) A highway is noisy and unattractive to look at. 3) It will hurt our property value and resale potential for our home built in 2008. For these reasons, this highway directly impacts our quality of life and would cause us to move to a new location.

There are alternatives to building this road which would alleviate the future traffic problems. State Farm could stagger the start and end time for employees.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Visual impacts will be assessed during the Environmental Assessment Analysis and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) has been formed. Landscaping and aesthetics will be discussed with the group.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The alternative analysis included a Transit Only Alternative and a Transportation Systems Management (TSM)/Travel Demand Management (TDM) Alternative. TSM strategies include small improvements to the existing transportation system, such as the installation of dedicated turn lanes, construction of spot geometric changes, or the adjustment of signal timing implemented to create a more efficient use of existing facilities and vehicle operation. TDM strategies are policy changes implemented to influence travel behavior, spread travel across peak periods, and reduce the demand for single-occupancy vehicle trips. Examples include alternative work times, ride-sharing, or bicycle incentives. The Transit Alternative and the TSM/TSM Alternatives were eliminated during the alternative analysis process due to their inability to meet the project's Purpose and Need on their own. However, because they provide some level of benefit in reducing congestion, transit and TSM/TDM elements will be considered as part of the roadway build alternatives.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
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April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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In regards to the East Side Highway Project, there is only one choice to make – the No Build option.

There are a myriad of reasons why this is the only viable choice. We are opposed to building the East Side Highway because:

- Revenues for businesses on Towanda-Barnes Road and on the west side which depend on I-55 and I-74 traffic will be adversely affected by this highway.*
- The population projections are way too high. It has been inflated to get support for this highway. When we moved to the Grove subdivision in 2008, there were supposed to be 900 homes built by 2013. Currently, there are around 300 homes in this subdivision. People who currently live east of Towanda-Barnes Road routinely commute easily to work, school, and businesses in Bloomington-Normal every day and would not benefit from this highway.*
- There is no need for this highway. In the 2010 census, Mclean County grew by 12.7% over the last decade to 169,572 people. Champaign County grew by 11.9% to 201,081 from 2000 to 2010. Interstates 57 and 74 intersect Champaign-Urbana. There is no bypass around those towns. We do not need a bypass here either. If the population doubles, perhaps then we need to consider a new road.*
- The noise and pollution created by semi-trucks would be unacceptable to my family and other residents in the vicinity. No amount of landscaping or noise barriers will be sufficient to alleviate the noise and undesirable sight of a highway. There would be limited resale potential for homes closest to the freeway and probably lower property values in the affected subdivisions.*
- It was the city of Bloomington's decision to develop the subdivisions that would be affected by the highway in the first place. Some of the world's best farmland has been taken out of productivity. Don't make another mistake by building this highway and taking more fertile farmland out of use, displacing family farmers, and infuriating local residents.*

- *This project will cost more than \$300 million. The State of Illinois and federal government are struggling financially and do not need to dole out money for this highway. Stop this boondoggle immediately! Maintain existing roads first!*

As concerned homeowner/farmer/tax-paying residents, we have no desire for the east side highway to be built which will ruin the serenity and aesthetic beauty in our community. Please listen to the majority on this issue and not the minority.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which

(is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Visual impacts will be assessed during the Environmental Assessment Analysis and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) has been formed. Landscaping and aesthetics will be discussed with the group.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact

analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S Schmitt". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



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No, the Eastside Highway Project should be stopped immediately. There is only one option feasible that is the No Build option. Quit wasting everybody's time.

Your employment and population projections continue to decline in total numbers from 1990 forward. For instance my subdivision was supposed to have 900 houses built by 2013. It currently has less than 300 – Therefore, a new road is not needed now, nor will ever be needed. Stop the project immediately.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It

has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S Schmitt', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Comment 1

This highway would not solve congestion problems and I personally would not use it to get to work. Most of my neighbors would not use it either. The highway would be used by travelers and trucks wanting to bypass Bloomington. This bypass will negatively impact businesses serving travelers on west side along I-55. It makes no sense to build it and it will serve no benefit to Bloomington residents.

Thank you.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Comment 2

Dear County Board Members,

I'd like to start by saying I am sending this to every McLean County Board member who's area is impacted by the proposed East Side Highway project. I realize some of you are on the west side of Bloomington, but your area will be economically impacted as well, which I will explain later.

I have attended the last two public meetings on the East Side Highway and understand from those meetings that this project was started several years ago for the following reasons:

- 1. Review Land Use Plan for 2035*
- 2. Analyze city growth and associated traffic patterns and volume out to 2035*
- 3. Identify options to alleviate any traffic congestion issues, based on anticipated growth rates and areas*

The engineering firm (Clark Dietz) looked at all North-South and East-West options for managing growing traffic volume. During the course of their analysis, the engineering firm realized there were no options to expand East-West roads since G.E. Road, Empire, and Ireland Grove cannot be widened due to build constraints. (The East-West roads are those primarily moving traffic to the job centers) This left the only remaining options as North-South options. Consequently, their analysis settled on a freeway running North-South.

Based on the above, there is no logical way the proposed highway solves the original problem Clark Dietz was hired to resolve. The intent was to alleviate traffic congestion for the residents of Bloomington-Normal. Moving cars faster north and south, will do nothing to reduce traffic on the East-West roads people must use to get to the job centers. I live in the northeast side of town and will not use this freeway to get to work, nor have any of my neighbors said they would use it. We will continue to use Towanda-Barnes Road.

Consequently, the people using this proposed highway would be travelers and semi-trucks going from I-55 to I-74 who want to avoid going around the West side of the city. This brings me to the West side Board Members. Your areas will see a PERMANENT reduction in business revenue as traveler and truck traffic will be reduced along I-55 around the Market St. exit. Additionally, it makes no sense to route traffic away from the improvements we just paid for on I-55 through B-N.

There is a concept in business and government management called Escalation of Commitment. Escalation of Commitment is when a project is started to solve a problem, but during the course of the project it is realized it won't actually solve the problem. However, since time, money, and emotional energy has been wrapped up into the project there is an increasing commitment to finish the project even though it won't solve the problem you originally intended to solve. I apologize for the academic exercise, but I want to make my point that this project needs to be killed as it won't solve the originally identified issue.

I know you have heard from others who do not support it due to noise, health issues, and property values. I am also opposed because of those, but most importantly, this project no longer makes any sense as it will not solve the original issue and it would be a waste of taxpayer money.

Feel free to contact me if you'd like to discuss further. I thank you for your time.

ps: You may hear from Clark Dietz that their traffic flow analysis shows a very slight reduction in East-West congestion after the highway is built. This is not logical as they cannot widen those East-West roads. Having done modeling before, I believe there is a fundamental flaw in their traffic model for this project. Again, moving traffic faster north and south cannot logically reduce traffic volume east and west; it just gets cars to the traffic jam faster!

Response:

See response to comment 1 above.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The possible alternatives considered in this study included a stand-alone East-West Alternative. The East-West Alternative included improving or widening east-west arterials. The arterials selected for improvement were identified by volume to capacity (v/c) ratios greater than 0.8 in the traffic modeling of the No Build Alternative. The list of arterials included segments of: Morrissey Ave. (US 150), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Empire Street (IL Rte. 9), General Electric Road (1500N), and Old Route 66. The East-West Alternative was eliminated during the Macro Analysis phase of evaluation for excessive residential impacts. It had the highest number of residential impacts (106) of any alignment considered. However, as previously stated, even though it has been eliminated as a stand-alone solution, segments of east-west arterials may be included in the recommended Build Alternative for improvement.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
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April 5, 2012



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I think you need to re-evaluate moving the road further out like the 2100 option. No matter which option commercial business is going to come in. There is no way you are going to stop that.

I believe your growth potential is over inflated and this road is not needed.

You are ruining many lives just because you have money burning a hole in your pocket.

I don't want an expressway in my front yard bringing my property value down and bringing in more people increasing the crime rate.

Response:

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The alternatives that utilized CR 2100 E were eliminated during the Alignment Analysis, in part due to impacts to farmland and Kickapoo Creek, and inconsistencies with The McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
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I would very much oppose a freeway or expressway type located at the western-most alternative location. (The one closest to Towanda-Barnes Rd.) My belief is property values in the Eagle View Subdivision would be negatively impacted. Also, the noise factor with speed limits being 45 MPH or higher would have a negative quality of life impact on many residences, especially as a major truck route which it would surely become.

Response:

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

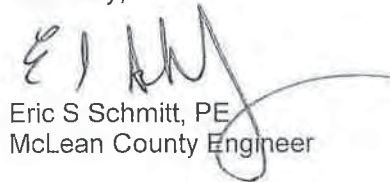
It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

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During presentation the number of homes impacted appears to not address the fact of noise pollution, exhaust/emissions, and fuel/oil disasters (potential) relative to the Grove Subdivision and Kickapoo Creek/Park.

North/South Highway will potentially increase traffic East/West on Ireland Grove Rd. as it will serve State Farm employees at a higher volume.

Benjamin School and the safety of kids and school buses will be impacted due to increase traffic.

Highway exit areas increase crime areas – impact to the Grove Subdivision – way of life and its intent.

**Ask yourself if you would want this in your backyard for your family – look in mirror – if you are ok.*

Response:

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level)

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With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

Potential fuel oil spills are not considered in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed per IDOT and FWHA safety standards.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I don't like the proposal to build this highway.

- 1. I don't see a need. There's never any traffic in town. The forecast for population growth doesn't seem realistic.*
- 2. 250 feet away from the proposed route shouldn't be used as the criteria for consideration of number of homes being influenced. Instead, the total number of homes in the subdivision in which the homes within the 250 ft radiator should all be considered. The property values of the whole subdivision are going to be influenced, not only those homes within the 250 ft radiator.*
- 3. The proposal is not fair for individual homeowners who purchased the property without proactive governmental effort to communicate this initiative.*

So, I vote for the no-build option.

Response:

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic

projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the

While in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than several of the other eliminated alignments, the remaining alignments have passed four levels of increasingly detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. They contain no unrealistic or non-feasible alternatives.
2. They are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project; these alignments were found to best provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will help to accommodate projected traffic increases from the development.
3. They have fewer "direct" impacts on existing homes (i.e., acquisitions) and fewer acres of farmland removed from production than alignments which were eliminated.
4. They have fewer impacts to primary agricultural land, are less likely to encourage development inconsistent with the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, do not cross the main branch of the Kickapoo Creek, and are closer to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes than alignments which were eliminated.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



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I am extremely concerned about having the highway so close to the house. What effect does having the highway so close have on property values? A estimate of a potential drop in value would be appreciated (% decrease expected). I suspect property value will go down yet taxes will increase. I am also concerned about the noise a highway and related development (gas stations, truck stops, etc.). What type of noise barrier would be constructed to help mitigate the noise? I am not convinced this highway is necessary. What impact would this have on businesses on the west side that would have reduced business if traffic is reduced on that side of town? I would urge a different alternative to be considered to have an east side highway built further to the east to be further away from residential areas. Is this highway for people who live in the area of for people just traveling through the area? I would not use a freeway to travel to another part of B-N. It seems like this is being pitched to help people that live in McLean County but how many would actually use it vs. people that don't live in the area and are just passing through = bypass.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences

within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

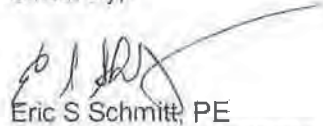
Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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April 5, 2012



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1. *I believe the "employment trends and forecasts" graph 2012 projection should more likely follow the 1970-1985 slope than the 1985-2000 slope. Economic activity and growth in US in general is unlikely to at the rate seen in 1985-2000 (a period of phenomenal US economic growth).*
2. *The only true advantage I see to this project is improved traffic access at the northeast corner of the urban area (currently seriously impeded by I-55 interchange, the railroad and US66). A smaller project in the Northtown road area allowing traffic from either Airport or Towanda-Barnes roads to get to I-55 or past without entering town would be cheaper and possibly as effective. (See map on back.)*



3. If this road turns into merely a crowded truck bypass for the area, I think the impact will be a negative.

Response:

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Your comment regarding Northtown Road has been noted.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer

We are amazed at how quickly the other options were taken off the table. If you must build this, it needs to be placed significantly further East where all it disrupts is farmland. At least the farmers will get top dollar for their farm land. With the remaining two options, all we get is a nuisance, a disruption to our families and homes, and extreme division for the community and its growth!

Please choose the NO BUILD option! Thank you.

Sincerely,


Eagle View Residents

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

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The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be

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With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

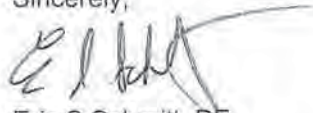
Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less

compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

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McLean County Engineer



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Dear Clark Dietz, Inc.

Thank you for the excellent presentation on January 11, 2012 and for the opportunity to comment. I realize the study has many issues to consider, but I personally believe the current options are missing the mark to some degree.

The east side will continue to grow. However, current growth has basically shown that residential developments should occupy much of the land to the immediate east of Towanda-Barnes Road...not an interstate type highway. If the desire is to provide an Interstate link from I-74 to I-55 then it should be accomplished with a straight line connector link, far to the east and out of residential areas, with upgrades to the servicing roads (Ireland Grove, GE, Hwy 9, etc.). However, this option has presently been eliminated. The given reason, to discourage or prevent urban sprawl. However, no one has prevented urban sprawl thus far and will not prevent it in the future.

As the future unfolds, I believe major residential and minor commercial activity would fill the current farm properties where the proposed road options are located. Placing a major Interstate connector on this property would remove the residential aspect and simply push developments further to the east. Thus, instead of trying to curb urban sprawl...you would actually encourage it by eliminating land that could be used to adsorb eastward residential activity. You would force residential developments to move farther east at a faster rate, occupying land you were trying to protect. In other words, a leap frog effect could take place by prematurely forcing new residential areas to "jump the road" and move farther east.

I can understand the possibility of creating an additional Towanda-Barnes type road to service the residential areas, but not to serve as an interstate connector.

As such, as currently proposed, I would suggest the NO BUILD option. However, I would also recommend a second look and possible reevaluation of the straight line connector located to the far east. It would serve several surrounding areas providing interstate access benefits to many communities, while keeping I-55 bound traffic on I-74 (and I-74 bound traffic on I-55) totally out of the residential areas of Bloomington-Normal.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Response:

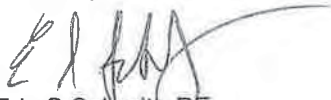
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Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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We are writing to voice our opposition to the proposed East side highway. We operate a family farm with two other generations of our family and a fourth generation 10 years or so from being involved also. The base of our family farm is directly in between the two options being proposed. Our family's multi generational home is also at this location. The impact this project will have on our family is one that is nearly impossible to adequately describe.

The practical implications are simpler to describe and yet no less daunting on their own. Based on the most recent proposals, a divided highway with limited exits will create a logistical travel nightmare for both our personal and business lives. We farm both east and west of our farmstead. As a result, we will have travel implications regardless of the option chosen. Depending on whether our road is closed or a bridge is created over the new highway, transporting farm equipment will become much more burdensome. In addition, multiple farms that we farm either owned or rented will be impacted. By impacted I mean fragmented by the road or consumed by it all together. This is some of the most productive land in the world. Replacing it is easier said than done and certainly there is no more farmland being made.

The mental and emotional implications are the ones that are tough to explain. Can you imagine living in the same home all your lives, the home your parents grew up in also and their parents before them and looking out the window to watch cars and semis drive by at 65 miles per hour where you used to watch your crops grow? The hardest part is knowing that there is little or nothing that we can do to stop the impact this will have on our family and our privately owned property. It is safe to say that we are one of many stories like this that will be a direct result of the thousands of acres of farmland that will be impacted. That excludes the impact on homeowners not related to agriculture.

My guess is you will not find a single supporter of this proposal in the impacted area. Those pushing this project will likely do so from their homes in areas that will not be impacted by this project. Please consider the human side of this project as this study moves forward. It is a tough pill to swallow to have someone else decide there is higher or better use for your home and land. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. I wish I thought this would actually have any impact on the progression of this project. If nothing else, please take a second to put yourself in our shoes and imagine how you would feel if your home was also impacted like ours will be if this moves forward.

Response:

The project team understands the emotional ties that people have to their homes, especially if those homes have been in the family for multiple generations. Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

As corridors were developed with the Community Working Group (CWG), alternatives were created that paralleled existing roads or tract lines to the greatest extent possible taking into account avoidance of other features. Minimizing impacts included effects on the splitting of farm parcels in addition to access to the remaining parcels. Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The design criteria used for overpasses or underpasses at crossroads will make allowances for the height and width of farm implements. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm implement issues. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access. It is important to note, however, that slow moving farm vehicles would be prohibited from accessing the ESH due to safety reasons.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

The current plans proposed by Clark/Dietz would be a ruination of the East side of Bloomington by making this an interstate type highway.

-It would bring additional traffic flow without adequate east-west flow of traffic and block existing east-west flow by limiting access with the new road.

-It would also bring additional truck traffic to the eastside of Bloomington and disrupt the quiet residential subdivisions and churches and parks already in place.

-The proposed highway would take 3000-5000 acres of valuable farmland and destroy it plus making access to and from fields for thousands of more acres.

-Improvement of Towanda Barnes Rd. with additional lanes would be much cheaper and would not affect east-west traffic patterns.

-The two proposed options are placed directly on top of existing high power lines in place which shows me that very poor planning has taken place in proposing a new site. (These power lines go north and south of 1300 East Rd. or Oakland Ave.)

-The proposed plan has already given Bloomington a leap frog affect for development by cutting subdivisions off from town and the road is not to be built for years to come. This tells me once again that very poor planning has been done on the final proposals.

-Finally, If the road is actually ever needed, improvement of Towanda Barnes Rd. and new North /South roads as development moves East from town will be more than adequate for traffic.

-We already have a bypass on the West side of Bloomington

Response:

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH. The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

The alternatives were developed to minimize impacts to utilities. The locations of all utilities which could conflict with a roadway facility (such as power transmission lines, cell phone towers, sewage pump stations, etc.) were evaluated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis and will be further evaluated for the remaining alignments during the Environmental Assessment

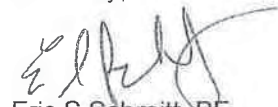
The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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Comment 1

I am concerned about the accuracy of the population growth projections. Have the last 3 years economic impact been considered along with major employers leaving or threatening to leave the state in regards to future population growth projections.

We support the No Build option or potential the D4/S2M options.

Thanks, [REDACTED]

Response:

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place

that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section D-1 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to disproportionately high impacts to residences.
- Section D-3 was eliminated during the Macro Analysis because of the skewed curve it contained and because it offered no advantages over Section D-2. Skews are points of intersection at angles less than 90° that present safety issues.
- Section D-4 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis because of its skewed crossing of Towanda-Barnes Road and US 150.
- Section D-5 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

Comment 2

We support the no build option. This proposal devastates our centennial farm blocking access to 135 acres, our 2 homes and 3 barns. It also infringes on several of our neighbors in a severe manner, including a cell tower positioned on the Reeser farmstead south of I-74.

Potentially there are other alternatives we could support if the population growth materialized as stated. This project and assessments may very well be premature by 20 plus years.

Response:

See response to comment 1 above.

Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) composed of local citizens is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm access issues.

The alternatives were developed to minimize impacts to utilities. The locations of all utilities which could conflict with a roadway facility (such as power transmission lines, cell phone towers, sewage pump

stations, etc.) were evaluated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis and will be further evaluated for the remaining alignments during the Environmental Assessment

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

Comment 3

Additional comments regarding the south end connections at I-74 and 1750 road. The On/Off ramps will take 100 acres of very productive farm land out of production. Also, it appears that an off ramp road will further encroach on our property and take out a house on the south end of our Centennial property. I oppose this project as proposed and support a no build solution.

Response:

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

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April 5, 2012



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Thanks to you and your staff for the information you provided at the above mentioned meeting. We have previously sent a letter to Jerry Payonk dated August 23, 2011. Since potential sites have been reduced from 129 down to 4, it now appears more certain that the proposed east side highway will go through our 150 acre farm on an angle and will cut our single parcel of farm land into 2 disconnected triangular parcels.

After the meeting, Stacie asked that we include some specific information about our parcel:

- The name on the property is Bank of Pontiac Trust # 2759*
- Linda and I are beneficial owners of Trust # 2759*
- The farm is in Old Towne Township on the south side of Rt. 150 across from Victory Christian Center Church.*

I do have several concerns about the project and its effects on the community. At the meeting, Jerry stated that one of the issues on the table is the reduction of leap frog development. Also brought up was the desire not to create a growth wall like what seems to have happened on Bloomington's west side when I 74 was built. I believe leap frog development occurs when the nearby property is deemed too expensive and farther out property can be developed at a lower cost. In a free society with the right of individuals to own property, I don't think prevention of leap frog development is a justified government activity. I believe that if an interstate type of highway is built around the east side of Bloomington, it will be much more of a wall to growth than a facilitator of future growth. We live in Pontiac where water and sewer was only recently provided across I 55 for construction of the new St James hospital. The reason those utilities finally crossed I55 was that the bequest of several million dollars specifically required placement of the new hospital west of I55. This highway will be a 2 edged sword, increasing the value of property within and decreasing the value of property outside the new highway ring. The only way to

counterbalance the effects of the "highway wall" is in my opinion to make great efforts to ease accessibility of utilities and people to both sides of this highway.

Also, home owners located near the highways path, especially those near an interchange, will likely suffer loss of quality of life and loss of the value of their property, whether their property is needed for the acquisition or not. The land fill near Pontiac has recognized that and has compensated nearby owners that have suffered a reduction in their property values. Even those whose land is acquired may suffer a reduction in value and/or reduced salability of their property prior to acquisition proceedings. Are these costs being considered a pertinent cost in the construction of this highway?

We have concerns specific to our farm as well. This farm also contains primarily Class A soils with the highest level of productivity. We have spent large amounts of money improving this farm by making repairs and improvements to the existing tile system and its waterways. We need adequate assurance that these assets will be protected and we will be able to perform maintenance as needed.

It appears the highway will cut our farm on a sharp angle and cause considerable increase in difficulty to farm. If the long straight rows we currently have are replaced with shorter pie shaped rows, this will make our farm more difficult and less efficient to farm, add to operational costs and reduce yields on increased headlands and point rows as well as make it a less desirable farm at time of sale.

Access to both pieces of a severed parcel is critical. Having the ability to move freely and easily from one parcel to the other without width, height or weight restrictions cannot be understated. Most farm machines require 30 to 50 foot wide unobstructed pathway to move from one portion of a field to another. Farm machines also can be as tall as 16 feet.

If farm equipment has to be prepared for road transport when moving from one portion of a field to another, this would add considerably to our operational time and costs (mobilization costs could be doubled). This can be extremely important to farmers due to the need to perform farm operations in a very narrow time frame each season. For example, in order to avoid crop losses, planting usually needs to be completed within a 30-40 day window regardless of weather conditions.

When we purchased this farm, one of the features that appealed to us was that it was a large enough parcel that it made the 40 mile trip to Bloomington worthwhile. If our farm is separated into 2 pieces and we end up owning a landlocked parcel that we cannot get access to, not only do we lose the future use value of that land, but the portion of the farm we retain might be too small to justify traveling the distance to farm it. If due to a reduction in the size of our farm, we are forced to rent the remaining portion (50/50 shares are common on farm leases), we would also lose ½ the income from the farm land we retain.

We also are concerned that land use restrictions could be placed on our property prior to commencement acquisition proceedings. This LIMBO status would result in the "TAKING" of current and future rights of use of our property without compensation! This is just not American!

I do expect to be informed prior to anyone involved in this project enters my farm. I also request to be provided proof of adequate insurance prior to entrance and be informed of the nature of the activities that will be performed. Since this property is in Trust, to make communication more direct, I am including our personal contact information.

As I indicated to Jerry and Stacie at this meeting, I am willing, if timing is acceptable, to participate in the Focus Working Group for Land use and Access Management. Please inform me in advance when this group may meet.

Thank you for your consideration.

Response:

Per Federal guidance, transportation planning activities must consider existing and future land use plans.

There is a tendency to assume that because there is an interstate on the west side of Bloomington-Normal (I-55/I-74,) and because the west side of the cities has developed slower than the east side, the interstate highway was the direct cause of the obstructed growth. Several factors have impacted development on the west side. The rural road network utilizing one mile grids is not as complete on the west side as on the east side of Bloomington. Roads and travel on the west side were impacted prior to the development of the Interstate because of Sugar Creek and the location of several railroad lines. Because of Sugar Creek and the size of the floodplain, large expensive bridges are necessary and therefore road crossings are kept to a minimum. The east side is primarily high ground near the top of several watersheds and therefore the rural road network was more complete, and this facilitated development. However, the primary cause of obstructed growth on the west side was the lack of sanitary sewer. Much of the west side is downstream of the BNWRD sewage treatment plant on West Oakland Avenue and requires expensive pumping stations to be served by sewers. The developed land on the east side of Bloomington-Normal was predominantly upstream of, and within the service area of, the West Oakland Avenue treatment plant. The undeveloped land on the east side of the cities is predominantly in the watershed of Kickapoo Creek and may be served by gravity to the BNWRD sewage treatment plant in Randolph Township.

Many of these constraints on the west side do not exist on the east side. The ESH is being planned from conception to be as transparent as possible to east-west connectivity and to enable east-west mobility.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

As corridors were developed with the Community Working Group (CWG), alternatives were created that paralleled existing roads or tract lines to the greatest extent possible taking into account avoidance of other features. Minimizing impacts included effects on the splitting of farm parcels in addition to access to the remaining parcels. Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

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The design criteria used for overpasses or underpasses at crossroads will make allowances for the height and width of farm implements. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm implement issues. It is important to note, however, that slow moving farm vehicles would be prohibited from accessing the ESH due to safety reasons.

During Phase II final design (after the EA is complete), coordination with impacted property owners will assist in the identification of field tile locations. Exploration trenching will be conducted on both sides of the right-of-way prior to construction to locate any unknown tile that may be impacted by the newly constructed roadway. When located, they are replaced within the right-of-way with stronger concrete pipe to protect against the structural load of the new roadway.

It is not the intent of this study, or of the Project Study Group, to place any restriction on property that would equate to a taking without compensation. However, there are precedents established that allow governments to plan for the orderly development of property by such means as: zoning codes, land use plans, transportation plans, and designated future road alignments. These measures have been enacted by the local governments and have been created with public involvement and review as required.

You will be notified via mail in advance of field surveys performed on your property.

Thank you for volunteering to serve on the Focus Working Group (FWG). The project team will contact you with details.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Comment 1

1. The final alignment chosen should minimize the following: 1) impacts on Kickapoo Creek + tributaries wetlands, riparian areas, and water quality; 2) loss of farmland; and 3) sprawl development.

2. The preferred connection to I-74 presented shows it continuing south of I-74 onto 1750E. This will likely stimulate access to I-74 from Highway 51 via 700N to 1750E, increasing traffic on both roads that will necessitate expansion of those roads. 700N forms the north border of the Kenneth L. Schroeder Wildlife Sanctuary. Also, both county roads are in the Little Kickapoo Creek drainage. That creek is already showing signs of stress from road salt based on available sampling results from a former professor at Illinois State University (Dr. Stephen van der Hoven, who is now at Genesis Engineering and Redevelopment Company in Ripon, CA; sjvanderhoven@gmail.com). I hope that these impacts will be fully assessed by the study team.

3. To date, I have been very pleased with the open and transparent process undertaken by Clark Dietz and Huff & Huff. This includes their willingness to answer all questions, consider all comments, and have regular interactions with the public. I wish this were the process for all infrastructure projects.

Response:

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or

bank vegetation) affected. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Assessment cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction. This group will assist in the assessment of water-related issues.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The project team is glad the public involvement process has been a positive experience for you, and encourages you to continue your participation.

Comment 2

Hello Jamie,

It was good to meet you at the East Side Highway public meeting. Below are the questions I have related to the ozone issue based on my understanding of the issue. Thanks.

██████████

*-----
U.S. EPA is likely to strengthen the ozone standard to a level within the range of 0.060-0.070 ppm. Depending on what number they choose, the Bloomington-Normal-McLean County area could be deemed noncompliant as we have a value somewhere within that range.*

- 1. What is our current value (number) within that range? For example, I heard that Peoria's value is 0.069, so they are likely to be affected by the strengthened standard.*

2. If our area does become noncompliant, my understanding is that a plan must be developed in order to stay eligible for federal highway funds. I also heard that any major new roads would have to be modeled in terms of their effects on ozone levels. However, I don't know at what point a proposed road is grandfathered in and does not require such modeling. Do you know at what stage in the development of a proposed road that would be, especially as regards the East Side Highway?

Response:

FHWA is not certain of the regions current value. If USEPA were to change the current standard (0.075 ppm), the region would possibly be at risk of becoming an air quality non-attainment area. However, a re-evaluation of the ozone standard by the USEPA is not scheduled until 2013 and as such this is not a significant concern for the region or the ESH project at this time.

If USEPA takes action on a new ozone standard in 2013, and if that action were to cause McLean County to be designated an ozone non-attainment area, it will take a certain amount of time for them to get these changes fully implemented (likely 1 to 2 years). Full implementation of this new ozone standard would then be in the 2014 to 2015 timeframe. This would require that the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the region go through an air quality conformity process. This conformity process would likely be required 1 year after the new USEPA standard is implemented – 2016 to 2017 timeframe. After that date, for any Federal action to occur, including final environmental approval or authorization of the use of federal funds for construction, the project must be included in an air quality conformity analysis for the region. There are no grandfathering provisions.

Essentially, this will come down to timing for the ESH. The current schedule shows completion of the ESH EA in 2014. If this schedule is met, the ESH will not be required to be included in a conforming LRTP and FHWA will be in a position to give final environmental approval of the EA. However, if USEPA changes the standard in 2013 or any other time in the future in a way that would cause McLean County to become a non-attainment area, the conformity process will be required. If this occurs sometime in the future, prior to FHWA being able to take any other Federal actions such as authorization of funds for the construction of the ESH, the project will need to be included in a conforming LRTP.

Comment 3

I just wanted to confirm my interest in serving on the Sustainability Focus Working Group (I did sign up at the last public meeting). I continue to be on the Boards of two local environmental organizations--JWP Audubon Society and Friends of Kickapoo Creek.

Response:

Thank you for volunteering to serve on the Focus Working Group. The project team will contact you with details.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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Comment 1

See my comments in the attachment and this proposal should be thrown in the trash as no one wants the highway on the east side of town. It takes forever for a simple highway construction to get completed, so I can't imagine how long you all with have our town tore up trying to build this highway. We live right off from the proposed highway and plan to fight this highway every step of the way!

I currently live in The Grove Subdivision which will definitely be affected by the proposed East Side Highway with the 250 foot buffer between the highway and our subdivision. While my house is not located right on the border, I cannot imagine the highway noise we'll have to contend with. No one wants to live directly by a highway due to the noise and you have some very expensive homes in this subdivision which means alot of property tax dollars. Having our property values diminished is not our idea of a great plan for a highway that is not needed. Our community struggles to maintain the streets we have so why not direct these funds to something more worthwhile.

The notion that fewer than 17 homes will be affected by the highway is garbage. This highway will affect the value of every home in this subdivision as I would not have moved out there if a highway was located anywhere close. The highway could be placed further east of the school and no homes would be affected, but this probably makes too much sense! I'm sure funding is coming from somewhere and some of you have a vested interest in having the highway constructed. Well, we have a vested interest as well as I own a \$400k home in that subdivision! Take your highway proposal somewhere else or simply expand the road ways already in place.

I'm from a major metropolitan area and the traffic in Bloomington is minimal at worst. This proposal for a state this is supposed to be broke is simply mind boggling. This proposal will bring home construction in

our subdivision to a halt and I cannot imagine any further residential development close to this highway gaining any traction. You have no support of this highway by anyone living close to it, so why are you all moving forward with the same project that has been proposed in the past. If you want a highway, build it by your own home as we don't want it!

Comment 2

Keep your highway away from The Grove Subdivision! This community is not that large to satisfy an interchange. Take care of the roads we have before attempting to build something new! Our subdivision is projected to be the largest in the community and this would have a huge impact on our property values.

Response:

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Several alternatives that utilize a portion of existing roads, including Towanda Barnes Road, CR 2000 E and CR 2100 E, were evaluated and included in the alternative analysis evaluation. Alternatives that utilize Towanda Barnes Road and CR 2100 E were eliminated during the alternative analysis process due to disproportionately high environmental and/or community impacts.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

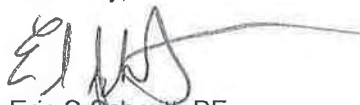
The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S. Schmitt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I am writing in opposition to the east side highway proposal for Bloomington.

I have several objections to this proposal.

- 1. The impact the highway will have on my property value in Eagle View Estates.*
- 2. The noise pollution from trucks and motor vehicles.*
- 3. The increased trash along this highway will land in my yard.*
- 4. I chose to live in this neighborhood because it was quiet and insulated by farmland. The development of the east side highway will consume the farmland. There is certain to be additional development of commercial businesses which will also affect our neighborhood adversely.*

I have many serious concerns about the need for this highway.

- 1. Is the model for determining the necessity of the ESH developed valid?*
- 2. If this model is not valid, there would not be the projected "improvement" to traffic flow. For instance, does it take into consideration personal preferences for driving routes as opposed to projected routes based solely on this model? I personally would not choose to drive east to the ESH in order to go to work at my south western office location.*
- 3. The multi-million dollar price tag of a highway which has not been proven to be necessary.*

2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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April 5, 2012



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I like I27 – Far East – North connection at Ziebarth.

By 2035 I hope Blm Nor have moved east and be closer to I27.

Do not build in close as it will be obsolete earlier.

I have no fish to fry in this project.

Thank you.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Your preference for alignment 127 has been noted. Public input on the remaining alignments will be considered when selecting the Preferred Alternative.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Cornerstone Christian Academy is in support of the Eastside Hwy Project!

Our only concern is that there remain access to our school during construction.

Response:

Thank you for your support of the ESH project. Please continue to attend the Public Information Meetings and submit feedback throughout the remainder of the project.

Access during construction to properties within or contiguous to the project alignment is something that is addressed in the Phase II design stage of an improvement (after the Environmental Assessment is completed). It is the policy of all of the transportation agencies (local, state, and federal) involved in this study to maintain access to all commercial properties (including schools) during construction. If this project is built, the assigned construction engineer will work with all affected properties to ease the inconveniences necessitated by construction.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



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Excellent study so far. I really like the final 2 alternatives and the freeway choice.

I can find nothing wrong with your analysis process.

I would like to be on your land use and management group if my background as an experienced architect of over 38 years would be beneficial and 8 years of being on the MC Regional Planning Commission 1997-2003.

Response:

Thank you for your support of the ESH project. Please continue to attend the Public Information Meetings and submit feedback throughout the remainder of the project. Thank you for volunteering to serve on the Focus Working Group (FWG). The project team will contact you with details.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

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Much ado about a simple freeway! Build the damn thing to act like a beltway between I-74 and I-75 down TB Road. Why waste all this time and money? Thank you!

Response:

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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If you build a highway right by our neighborhood, my friends will move away and nobody will like it.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

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McLean County Engineer



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I just don't see the need for this. It seems to do the same thing Towanda-Barnes does. Towanda-Barnes has ROW available on either side to widen it and create interchanges at key cross routes. Overlaying a freeway over the existing T-B row would cost less and be less disruptive.

Response:

Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

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April 5, 2012



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Very well done. Great communication. Very informative.

Eastview Christian Church has grown tremendously over the past few years. We sit on 95 acres immediately west of NCHS on the corner of RAAB and N. Airport Rd.

Our average attendance in 2011 was 4730 which was an increase of about 400 from the previous year. 2012 looks to continue this trend. An Eastside highway would be very beneficial for our church community. We would support and look forward to this development. The sooner the better!

Response:

Thank you for your support of the ESH project. Please continue to attend the Public Information Meetings and submit feedback throughout the remainder of the project.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

We do not need to build any more roads. We will run out of oil for traditional cars, and have enough roads for electric cars already. Do not ruin good farmland and annoy east side residents with another road. Period.

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012



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After attending the January 11, 2012 meeting regarding East Side highway alternatives, I am convinced that building the highway along either of the alternative routes would be a tremendous waste of tax payers' money. The primary rationale for the highway presented by the consultant was to alleviate build-up of traffic in Bloomington Normal, and provide support for growth in the northeast and southeast areas of the Twin Cities. The data presented by the consultant clearly showed that building the East Side highway as a freeway along either of the remaining alternative routes does not alleviate East-West traffic along Empire Road, but instead increases it, and will require substantial expansion of Empire to accommodate increased traffic.

The rationale for building a highway that connects I74 and I55 is not clear. It will not alleviate traffic on east-west roads in Bloomington-Normal, and will not provide any faster north-south access in the city on the east side than is already provided by the current, expansive Towanda Barnes Road. To build another north-south highway just a half mile east of an already underutilized, four lane north-south road (Towanda Barnes) is an unnecessary and unforgiveable waste of tax payers' money.

If the goal is truly to provide better north-south access on the east side to aid growth and development on the east side, then expand Towanda Barnes to a four lane highway north of Fort Jesse and south of Empire. That will certainly accommodate the expected city growth in the northeast and southeast. If the goal of the project is to connect Interstates 55 and 74, that goal does not serve the interests of the Twin Cities for residential and commercial development on the east side, but instead primarily provides a faster route for trucks to bypass Bloomington-Normal. Additional truck traffic on the east side would increase pollution and noise and negatively impact the families, schools and parks on the east side.

I support the NO BUILD option because the other proposed options do not solve the problem(s) they were intended to solve. Any development funds should be directed toward further enhancement of Towanda Barnes (north-south) and Empire (east-west) to improve the flow of traffic and support growth in

Bloomington-Normal. Any further consideration of developing a freeway or interstate on the east side is a waste of tax payers' money!

Response:

Based upon traffic modeling, Empire Street is projected to be over capacity in 2035 under the No-Build scenario and under the Build scenarios. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.


Per the National Environmental Policy Act, one goal of the ESH Environmental Assessment is to select a Preferred Alternative that minimizes community and environmental impacts. Alternatives utilizing Towanda Barnes Road were developed and evaluated. Widening Towanda Barnes Road to six lanes was included in the range of alternatives, but results in disproportionately high impacts to residences, businesses, and parks, when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated. It should be noted that the only alignments that included direct impacts to parks were along Towanda Barnes Road. Federal regulations require the examination of other alternatives when publicly-owned parks are directly impacted. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that publicly owned parks can only be used for a transportation facility if there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such land. In addition, due to the large number of residences and businesses along Towanda Barnes Road, impacts such as reduced access and increased noise would likely be higher for this alternative than for others.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried

through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Last July we built a new house in Eagle View South subdivision. We loved the location, quietness and the openness of the land to east. I am saddened to hear about the proposal of the east side highway. The proposed route of the highway would be roughly 900 feet from my property. I don't understand why the current proposal needs to be built so close to the city? Especially with Towanda Barnes Road already so close. The east side highway will have a negative impact on the east side of town. A once peaceful east side of town will now have issues to deal with such as noise, pollution, rezoned commercial property, and eventually crime. The current projected population growth by the year 2035 is significantly lower then projected which might show that the highway is not needed at all. If the east side highway would be built, the city of Bloomington would be completely surrounded by interstate highways, which would limit the growth of the city. If a interstate type of road is needed, the location needs to be further east of the city, or ideally not built at all which would be the popular vote. The state of Illinois is financially broke, why on earth would the state spend money on this highway that is totally unnecessary.

Response:

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The

impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Comment 1

To whom it may concern:

My family and I currently live on Kell Avenue which would back up to the proposed Eastside Highway. My husband and I chose this subdivision to purchase our first home in approximately three years ago to raise a family in. We chose this specific location because of the farmland behind our house. After living in Chicagoland area for over three years, we were ready for a change of scenery and quieter life. After searching Bloomington-Normal, we chose our home and moved in. We enjoyed the idea of a growing neighborhood and elementary school being built so close to home. We enjoy our quiet neighborhood with a backyard view of the sunset each night without traffic and buildings.

With that said, we are now faced with the losing the reason we chose our home. Our children will not be safe with the highway so close to their backyard playing area. Their safety includes physical safety (with the highway, increased traffic/exits/entrances) and their health (increased noise, construction dust and lower air quality from increased traffic).

This highway will end up costing my family money that could be spent in the local community. We would consider installing a privacy fence in our backyard to limit the noise and thereby eliminating our view of the sunset. As the market has shown in the past, placing a highway directly behind our house would significantly lower the retail market value of our property. Once we would decide to sell our home, we could potentially lose money in the sale because of the decision to place a highway directly behind our backyard.

With the highway so close to Towanda-Barnes road, it is possible that many new teenage drivers would be using it to get to high school at Normal Community. They would be entering and exiting the highway in a very short amount of road and at elevated speeds. If they choose not to take the highway, they will be

forced to deal with more traffic on Towanda-Barnes road from the entrances/exits off of the highway. By creating a highway, there will inevitably be bridges and underpasses - which increase the risk of ice formation and hazardous on the road with the elevation.

The reasons mentioned that the ESH was moved from east of Benjamin Elementary School were along the lines of growth and that it was too far out to encourage growth of the city. However, then we hear that even if an interchange isn't needed in the next ten years to plan for it to be place. My question - why wouldn't we plan for the potential growth and move the highway further out away from Towanda-Barnes road. Another criteria for the location for the ESH is that it not divide an already established neighborhood. I know that the current proposed location does not divide our neighborhood, but The Grove subdivision would be the only neighborhood on the other side of the highway thereby separating the town. Every day, my family would have to cross the ESH to get into town.

With construction on such an expansive project, our family's way into and out of town would be compromised. There would be increased traffic on the outer country roads as people from The Grove try to get to work, grocery, shopping, dining out, and school. The school busses for Benjamin Elementary would have difficulties getting to the school with Ireland Grove Road being closed for construction. Does anyone know if the country roads can support the increased traffic for the duration of the construction of the ESH?

Currently, there are many times when there are very few automobiles on Towanda-Barnes Road. There is some traffic at Ireland Grove/Towanda-Barnes before and after a typical work day and some traffic at each stoplight/intersection. However, it is never to the point of frustration or safety concerns. I fear with the entrances/exits of the ESH this would increase and become a concern. With the increased traffic using the ESH, could these roads (Ireland Grove, Empire, G.E., Ft. Jesse) tolerate increased traffic entering and leaving the highway? If they can't tolerate the traffic, can Bloomington-Normal support the financial need for further road construction at all these exchanges?

Currently, there are businesses that rely on the current traffic pattern and numbers on the west side of town. By rerouting some of this traffic, these businesses would be at risk for closing/losing business.

It is for these reasons above that we are not in support of the ESH and hope that you will consider our request and hear our concerns.

If the ESH is to be built, the entrance/exit ramps for Ireland Grove Road need to not be in the backyard of Kell Avenue - one drawing had the ramps completely south of Ireland Grove Road. If the ESH is slated to be constructed, please consider this option as to limit the backyard involvement of Kell Ave.

Comment 2

My family is very much against the current placement of the proposed ESH as it would directly impact our backyard. The highway and proposed interchange would be immediately behind our house increasing safety risk (traffic, noise, pollution) for our children. It would cost us money that could be spent in local economy (building a privacy fence, lower resale value of home). Other concerns include increased traffic at intersections from those entering/exiting the highway, increased cost of road maintenance from increased traffic, decreased revenue to already established businesses on west side of town for current highway, and our subdivision being the only neighborhood to the east of the highway - separating us from the rest of the town. Thank you for your time.

Response:

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a

responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

At this time, it has not been determined which agency will have jurisdiction over the ESH and therefore, responsible for standard roadway maintenance. Deicing activities will be part of roadway maintenance. The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

Access during construction to properties within or contiguous to the project alignment is something that is addressed in the Phase II design stage of an improvement (after the Environmental Assessment is completed). It is the policy of all of the transportation agencies (local, state, and federal) involved in this study to maintain access to all commercial properties (including schools) during construction. If this project is built, the assigned construction engineer will work with all affected properties to ease the inconveniences necessitated by construction.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

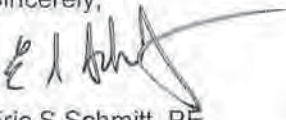
At this time, it has not been determined which agency will have jurisdiction over the ESH and therefore, responsible for standard roadway maintenance.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away

from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S. Schmitt", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

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We understand the objective of this research project and the potential need for an east side highway. It is the four proposed location options remaining that concern us. Why propose to build a large freeway so close to established neighborhoods and an elementary school when there is plenty of land to the east that is far less populated? If the Bloomington Normal area is expected to grow as much as the forecasts say, then wouldn't it be true that this could sustain and foster a freeway further east? If this project might not even take place for 5, 10, 15 + years, then why squeeze it in between Towanda-Barnes Road and many neighborhoods? It really is a tight location to put a highway within. The housing sprawl has neighborhoods on both sides of Towanda-Barnes that will be severely affected by this development with road noise, pollution, increased traffic on these entry roads, more dangerous intersections/exits, decreased property values, etc.

We live on the very west edge of the Grove on Kickapoo Creek. We are concerned about the safety of our neighborhood with the proposed freeway location essentially in our back yard. We think that we should be included in the affected residential impact. Just because we are not displaced by the proposed freeway, we are still affected by it and would like to be included in those assessments. Just think of what this will do to property values. We know that your research says that property values will not be significantly impacted, but we have seen otherwise on the west side near the highway. It would be one thing if we built or bought a home next to an already established highway, but we built on high value land that will suffer drastic value reductions after the highway is built. Also, our neighborhood in particular received an EPA grant to reestablish the grove and surrounding parkland. The beneficial effects from these efforts will easily be cancelled out by sticking a freeway right next to it.

We are not in support of this project based on the proposed locations. We suggest looking further east for new locations in less populated areas, away from established neighborhoods. Please listen to the feedback from the citizens in this area that like living here and appreciate the area and it's prosperity. We're sure you are used to NIMBY-ism with these sorts of research projects, but there is an opportunity

here to build a freeway further east that would minimize these concerns. Please support our cause and consider further east locations for this project.

Thanks for your consideration.

Response:

While in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than several of the other eliminated alignments, the remaining alignments have passed four levels of increasingly detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. They contain no unrealistic or non-feasible alternatives.
2. They are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project; these alignments were found to best provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will help to accommodate projected traffic increases from the development.
3. They have fewer "direct" impacts on existing homes (i.e., acquisitions) and fewer acres of farmland removed from production than alignments which were eliminated.
4. They have fewer impacts to primary agricultural land, are less likely to encourage development inconsistent with the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, do not cross the main branch of the Kickapoo Creek, and are closer to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes than alignments which were eliminated.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

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Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

There is a tendency to assume that because there is an interstate on the west side of Bloomington-Normal (I-55/I-74,) and because the west side of the cities has developed slower than the east side, the interstate highway was the direct cause of the obstructed growth. Several factors have impacted development on the west side. The rural road network utilizing one mile grids is not as complete on the west side as on the east side of Bloomington. Roads and travel on the west side were impacted prior to the development of the Interstate because of Sugar Creek and the location of several railroad lines. Because of Sugar Creek and the size of the floodplain, large expensive bridges are necessary and therefore road crossings are kept to a minimum. The east side is primarily high ground near the top of several watersheds and therefore the rural road network was more complete, and this facilitated development. However, the primary cause of obstructed growth on the west side was the lack of sanitary sewer. Much of the west side is downstream of the BNWRD sewage treatment plant on West Oakland Avenue and requires expensive pumping stations to be served by sewers. The developed land on the east side of Bloomington-Normal was predominantly upstream of, and within the service area of, the West Oakland Avenue treatment plant. The undeveloped land on the east side of the cities is predominantly in the watershed of Kickapoo Creek and may be served by gravity to the BNWRD sewage treatment plant in Randolph Township.

Many of these constraints on the west side do not exist on the east side. The ESH is being planned from conception to be as transparent as possible to east-west connectivity and to enable east-west mobility.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and

an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The project team is aware of the EPA grant and work being done on the Kickapoo Creek near The Grove. The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



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Please log this comment with others expressing a desire to see this project abandoned. The reasons for the opinion are listed below.

- 1. Local scholars can provide convincing arguments that the growth projections underpinning this highway development are flawed. We likely do not need this highway. As the need for this development is in question, plans for its construction should not move ahead.*
- 2. Resources locally and nationally for transportation initiatives are very tight at this time. We have existing, long delayed needs in this area for improved public transportation that need to be addressed before we devote huge sums of money for highway expansion. We should not tacitly encourage increased numbers of vehicles in our area by building a new highway. Instead, we should plan public transportation improvements and bike paths that will make it possible for residents to travel in this area without getting into an automobile.*
- 3. Plans for this highway aim to minimize environmental impacts of this project. Better to eliminate such environmental impacts by choosing not to build it at all.*

I am interested in redefining what constitutes progress in this area.

New highways are part of business as usual approaches. We need progress that takes into account current economic contraction, peak oil, and climate change. I encourage you to look at what the City of Boulder is supporting: www.wildsagecohousing.org/. There city planners and residents worked to create a new development that carefully wove public transportation and bike paths into the heart of the community's design. This kind of approach is what Bloomington/Normal needs at this time.

Response:

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

A stand-alone Transit Alternative was evaluated for its effectiveness to meet the Purpose and Need Statement of the project. Several modes of bus transit and light rail (including streetcar/trolley) were considered. The Bloomington-Normal urbanized area year 2035 population and employment densities were reviewed in evaluating the appropriate transit mode to serve the area. Given the population density thresholds, Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services would likely be the best fit for the project study area. Premium transit modes such as Light Rail Transit are not recommended because the projected population density will not support them.

Given that the system wide ridership for all of Bloomington-Normal is less than 5,000 trips per day with 11 fixed routes, the implementation of Local Bus or Enhanced Local Bus services as a stand-alone alternative would not meet the unmet demand of over 50,000 trips per day within the study area. Unmet demand is defined as the amount of volume reduction required on the failing road in relation to the capacity of the road. However, transit may provide merits as a supplement to the ESH improvements being considered for the project and will be further evaluated as alignments are refined and design progresses. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address how alternative modes of transportation (including transit) and bicycles can be maximized through the development of an ESH.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Comment 1

I am strongly opposed to building an East Side Highway and I fully support the No-Build option.

Some of the evaluated alternatives that leveraged Towanda Barnes were ruled out in the initial screening because those routes would bisect or isolate the neighborhoods northeast of Downs. The same is true of the current proposed routes as it related to The Grove neighborhood. The Grove is THE ONLY area WITHIN the city limits of Bloomington that is bisected by the proposed routes. This would effectively isolate The Grove from the rest of the city, stifling growth and reducing existing home values in the area.

Impacted homes in the study were determined to be homes within the 250 foot right-of-way of the proposed route. Demolition of a home should not be the only qualification to determine if a home is "impacted". Building an interstate so close to existing neighborhoods like The Grove, Eagle View, Eagle View South, and Lamplighter would greatly increase noise and air pollution and reduce residential safety in these areas. I definitely consider these impacts. These neighborhoods should have been more carefully considered in your evaluation.

The growth projections for 2035 show much of the estimated growth concentrated in residential areas on the east side of Bloomington-Normal, where quality of life would be most negatively impacted by the construction of this highway. That growth will not be accomplished in those areas if this road is built, which puts its location and need into question.

There is no support explaining why the proposed route must connect I-55 and I-74. If the rationale for building a highway is based on the population growth of Bloomington-Normal and the ability to navigate the city, how does connecting these two interstates enable travel within the city? It doesn't.

I fully support the No-Build option. In the No-Build option, the only estimated Volume-to-Capacity ratios that would indicate substantial overcrowding (shown in red) on east-west roads are in Towanda and outside of Downs on Rte. 150. Neither of these locations is within Bloomington-Normal so I don't believe we need a road through Bloomington-Normal to fix this. The roads in those locations should be expanded instead. Similarly, based on the projections, the most substantially over crowded north-south section of road would be on Towanda-Barnes south of Rte. 150. This is not in Bloomington. This is a section of two-lane road that primarily serves small residential areas south of Rte. 150. It wasn't even expanded to 4-lanes when the rest of Towanda-Barnes Road was in the late 90's/early 2000's. This should be the least concerning area for congestion in the entire study. I feel this was included in an attempt to show more "red" in the No-Build option.

An East-West alternative that proposed improving and expanding existing east-west routes was ruled out because east west roads like Fort Jesse, Route 9 (Empire), Ireland Grove, and Rte. 150 would have to be expanded to accommodate the estimated future traffic. The two remaining proposed routes for the East Side Highway have interchanges at ALL of these roads. I find it very hard to believe that these east-west roads will not all have to be expanded anyway to accommodate this on/off traffic. Eliminating the East-West alternative as a viable option does not make sense.

Do the vehicle hour savings estimates and their associated reduction of emissions take into account new stricter federal government mandated vehicle fuel efficiency requirements or the increase in electric vehicles that is likely by the year 2035? This benefit seems exaggerated. I also wonder whether the emissions and pollution that are going to be produced during the construction of this road were considered.

The Focus Working Groups that will be made up of area residents cater to interests such as farmland use, sustainability, and bicycle/pedestrian interests. Why isn't there a subcommittee for affected homeowners in neighborhoods like Lamplighter, Eagle View, Eagle View South, and The Grove? You overlooked a significantly impacted group of concerned citizens.

Comment 2

I am strongly opposed to building an East Side Highway & I fully support the No-Build option! We do not want or need another interstate connecting I-55 & I-74!

I do not think the evaluation process was done fairly. Impacted homes in the study were determined to be homes within the 250 foot right-of-way of the proposed route. Demolition of a home should not be the only qualification to determine if a home is "impacted." Building an interstate so close to existing neighborhoods like The Grove, Eagle View, Eagle View South & Lamplighter would greatly impact those neighborhoods. It would greatly increase noise & air pollution & reduce residential safety in these areas. These neighborhoods are all nice areas of Bloomington that will definitely be negatively affected if an interstate were to be built. These neighborhoods should have been more carefully considered in your evaluation! The growth projection for 2035 show much of the growth on the east side of Bloomington. If this interstate is built, growth is going to be destroyed in the neighborhoods on the eastside. No one wants to live by an interstate. Would you?!

There is no support explaining why the proposed route should connect I-55 & I-74. It doesn't make any sense! It is not needed! If the rationale for building a highway is based on the population growth of Bloomington-Normal & the ability to navigate the city, how does connecting these two interstates enable travel within the city? It doesn't! Let's improve upon the current infrastructure that we have instead of wasting millions on something we don't need & no one in the city of Bloomington wants!! I really hope that the voice & opinions of the tax payers, voters & residents of Bloomington are being seriously considered. I have not talked to one person who is in favor of the East-Side Highway.

Response:

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The possible alternatives considered in this study included a stand-alone East-West Alternative. The East-West Alternative included improving or widening east-west arterials. The arterials selected for improvement were identified by volume to capacity (v/c) ratios greater than 0.8 in the traffic modeling of the No Build Alternative. The list of arterials included segments of: Morrissey Ave. (US 150), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Empire Street (IL Rte. 9), General Electric Road (1500N), and Old Route 66. The East-West Alternative was eliminated during the Macro Analysis phase of evaluation for excessive residential impacts. It had the highest number of residential impacts (106) of any alignment considered. However, even though it has been eliminated as a stand-alone solution, segments of east-west arterials may be included in the recommended Build Alternative for improvement.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

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The Community Working Groups (CWG), formed as part of the Context Sensitive Solutions process being employed in the preparation of this Environmental Assessment, are as diverse as possible. It is the intention that all viewpoints be represented. Care is being taken that no one viewpoint is allowed to monopolize and dominate discussion. The CWG meeting minutes are available on the project website for public viewing.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012



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The growth projections for 2035 show much of the estimated growth concentrated in residential areas on the east side of Bloomington-Normal, where quality of life would be most negatively impacted by the construction of this highway. That growth will not be accomplished in those areas if this road is built, which puts its location and need into question.

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Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The two major points of focus of the Purpose and Need Statement are not geographically restricted to the current corporate limits of Bloomington and Normal, but are meant to serve the entire east side supported by the 2035 land use plan. As stated during the Public Information Meeting #4 presentation, a desirable volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio is 0.8 or lower. Above this ratio a roadway approaches or exceeds capacity. In comparing the remaining 2035 Build Alternatives to the 2035 No-Build Alternatives, one goal of the study is to improve those roadways within the study area that are forecasted to operate at a v/c ratio over 0.8. On the 2035 No-Build V/C map, these locations are depicted not only in red (>1.2 v/c) but also in yellow (0.8 to 1.0 v/c) and orange (>1.0 to 1.2 v/c). These locations are scattered throughout the east side and located primarily within the limits of the 2035 land use plan.

The possible alternatives considered in this study included a stand-alone East-West Alternative. The East-West Alternative included improving or widening east-west arterials. The arterials selected for improvement were identified by volume to capacity (v/c) ratios greater than 0.8 in the traffic modeling of the No Build Alternative. The list of arterials included segments of: Morrissey Ave. (US 150), Ireland

Grove Road (1200N), Empire Street (IL Rte. 9), General Electric Road (1500N), and Old Route 66. The East-West Alternative was eliminated during the Macro Analysis phase of evaluation for excessive residential impacts. It had the highest number of residential impacts (106) of any alignment considered. However, even though it has been eliminated as a stand-alone solution, segments of east-west arterials may be included in the recommended Build Alternative for improvement.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Vehicle hours per day were measured in order to evaluate the cumulative travel time savings to/from major travel nodes (activity centers) in the region. Number of vehicle hours saved per day for the entire transportation network was also measured in order to evaluate the travel time savings throughout the entire region. All alternatives provided travel time savings compared to the No-Build Alternative. Emission reduction was not calculated.

The Community Working Groups (CWG), formed as part of the Context Sensitive Solutions process being employed in the preparation of this Environmental Assessment include members who represent homeowner interests and include residents of The Grove. It is the intention that all viewpoints be represented. Care is being taken that no one viewpoint is allowed to monopolize and dominate discussion. All those who volunteered to serve on the CWG were accepted. The CWG meeting minutes are available on the project website for public viewing.

The purpose of the Focus Working Groups (FWGs) is to provide input on specific technical aspects of the project. Homeowners with an interest or knowledge in the FWG topics were invited to serve on a FWG. Several members of the subdivisions mentioned in the comment do serve on the FWGs. Additional FWGs may be formed as the project continues.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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As a resident of the Grove subdivision, I am against all of the remaining options, but the ones that curve toward the east definitely need to be removed from consideration. From what I've heard, those options would involve cancelling a bunch of Grove development. Even if that's not true, it will still be way too close. I bought my house with the understanding that the field next to me was going to be the second phase of development. Putting an interstate in place of that scheduled development WILL lower my quality of life and property value, whether you want to admit it in your FAQ section or not. In your analysis of impacted homes, did you also consider homes that are scheduled to be built? I didn't completely catch why you eliminated the options further east (something about area), but maybe those should be brought back if you're dead set on building this thing. There's got to be a way to do this without sticking it to a bunch of people who bought \$300,000 to \$400,000 homes.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality. Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods.

The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased

accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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I have major concerns about this east side highway being built. For one it is impacting too many neighborhoods. The Grove subdivision for one was built because it is in an isolated location from town and now it is going to have a major freeway driving right past it. Not only are the residents impacted for loss of property value, but what about the children. The impact to the new school that the town of Bloomington just built is sad. I worry about the safety of the children for many reasons. The extra traffic on Ireland Grove Road along with the School buses that travel that road twice a day. In addition to the possible crime that this road can bring. I still can't figure out how this road can be justified for the little bit of time savings there is going to be from just using Towanda Barnes Rd. Just seems like it would make more sense to build this road further to the east or not at all. Just seems like there are already too many alternative road choices to spend 300+ million dollars on this project. Please Bloomington, don't do this to your tax payers!

Response:

While in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than several of the other eliminated alignments, the remaining alignments have passed four levels of increasingly detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. They contain no unrealistic or non-feasible alternatives.
2. They are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project; these alignments were found to best provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will help to accommodate projected traffic increases from the development.
3. They have fewer "direct" impacts on existing homes (i.e., acquisitions) and fewer acres of farmland removed from production than alignments which were eliminated.
4. They have fewer impacts to primary agricultural land, are less likely to encourage development inconsistent with the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, do not cross the main

branch of the Kickapoo Creek, and are closer to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes than alignments which were eliminated.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



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Comment 1

After reviewing the alternatives, I still strongly oppose the east side highway. I still do not see the benefit of this highway to the community when we allow interstate traffic to bypass it as well as the need to spend government funds on a worthless project. In addition, as a homeowner in the Grove subdivision located at the end of Kell Avenue, I see the on/off ramps to Ireland Grove to demolish my homes resale value.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

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I am greatly concerned by the highway being proposed on the east side of Bloomington. I feel that this is a waste of taxpayer dollars, as it will rarely be used by the residents of Bloomington-Normal. Any use of the freeway, as mentioned at a recent presentation, would primarily be for commuters going from I-55 to I-74, with the potential to increase the traffic at GE Road. GE Road does not have much room at all for expansion and would make traveling more difficult for Bloomington-Normal residents that leverage that road.

It was mentioned multiple times that one goal is to avoid sprawl, but that makes little to no sense to me. Bloomington-Normal, and the surrounding areas, are full of sprawl, making multiple unique subdivisions as a result. The city will grow to fit the boundaries, and placing an east side highway farther east, if one is in fact built, would allow the city to grow even more. Placing the freeway so close to Towanda-Barnes would not only create an eyesore, but is also shortsighted as the city continues to grow. If the freeway is built at that location, how do we know that, if it starts getting used by the city residents, that it won't turn into another Veteran's Parkway and this research will have to be done again, because estimates were wrong?

Response:

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

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come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

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To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with existing land use plans to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alignments that were inconsistent with this criterion were eliminated from further consideration.

It is understood that land will be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that it provides. For this reason, the preferred alternative should be one for which the expected land use changes most closely resembles the intent of the 2035 Land Use Plan.

Visual impacts will be assessed during the Environmental Assessment Analysis and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) has been formed. Landscaping and aesthetics will be discussed with the group.

The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 5, 2012



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I am a resident of The Grove subdivision and a lifelong resident of Bloomington. I feel this freeway is part of some political agenda, as I haven't heard a single positive comment about it from anyone. It's not being sold as a bypass, but yet it hooks into two major interstates, so if that's not a bypass what is? Here are my concerns:

- 1) *Safety of children in the areas closest to the freeway exits/entrances as well as the freeway itself.*
- 2) *Noise level of highway traffic in close proximity to residential areas*
- 3) *Lower property values in affected subdivisions*
- 4) *Limited resale value of homes closest to the freeway*
- 5) *Limited use by residents in day to day travel*
- 6) *Use of the freeway as a bypass by semi-trucks and other commercial traffic*
- 7) *Increased commercial zoning along the freeway, resulting in significant truck traffic exiting onto Ireland Grove, Route 9, G.E. and Ft. Jesse roads. This will result in more frequent and costly road repairs which local government cannot afford.*
- 8) *Increased traffic congestion on those intersecting roads*
- 9) *West side businesses that depend on I-55 and I-74 traffic will see decreased revenues*
- 10) *Freeway traffic exiting at a high speed and coming upon slow moving farm equipment is hazardous.*
- 11) *East side population growth projections on which the freeway proposal is based are (at best) questionable*
- 12) *Why a freeway? Why not just a "normal" north/south road, which could then be located just east of Benjamin or Cornerstone schools?*

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate the managed growth, as described in McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land use at http://www.mcplan.org/community/regional_plan/regionalplan.html.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads. Specific interchange locations are still being studied. Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included in the final recommendation.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several "Build" options, a "No Build" option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected under the Build options vs. the No Build option. To accommodate anticipated growth within the project area, this study will seek to identify east-west routes that need to be improved or widened to accommodate increased volume in conjunction with the ESH. Recommendations to that effect will be included in the final report.

The design criteria used for overpasses or underpasses at crossroads will make allowances for the height and width of farm implements. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being created to address land use and access management. One task for this group will be to assist in identifying farm implement issues. It is important to note, however, that slow moving farm vehicles would be prohibited from accessing the ESH due to safety reasons.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

As a homeowner in Eagle View, I wish to share my sincere concern over the potential locations for the new eastside highway. I first would like to commend city officials and county board members for planning for the future of Bloomington and its surrounding county of McLean. This vision has and will continue to serve Bloomington residents well, as we enjoy a high quality of life from our leaders' thoughtfulness.

I continue to support the city and county's progress and know well that sacrifices are sometimes made for the benefit of many. But, I believe the eastside highway's two proposed locations ask Eagle View residents to pay much too high of a price. The Eagle View neighborhood has and will continue to face a very slow development process. Despite the relative health of the Bloomington-Normal economy, housing has suffered. I believe the build of the eastside highway so near to the neighborhood jeopardizes further development, as new homeowners will seek areas with less interstate noise, less commercial development (gas stations, hotels, fast food establishment, etc) and less traffic. Empty lots with overgrown weeds will inevitably persist, perpetuating the difficult build-out. For residents that have already made Eagle View their home, we will face meaningful erosion of the value of our greatest asset, highway noise, and high levels of traffic with which our children must contend. And, as we learned from our city manager on January 17th, without the build-out of the neighborhood, a park is much less likely. So, here Eagle View homeowners may sit, making not only a large financial sacrifice but also a large quality of life sacrifice. I understand the many obstacles that face more easterly routes for the bypass, but I believe that the disproportionate impact on Eagle View (and other neighborhood) homeowners should prove burdensome in this decision.

I support a more easterly build of the eastside highway.

Response:

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, existing and planned parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the

Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a Freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the next stage of analysis, the Environmental Assessment Analysis. There are guidelines established in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – Title 23 – Highways, which address constructive impacts to parks. A constructive impact is not a direct physical impact, but an impact resultant of adjacent or nearby construction. An example of a constructive impact would be noise. If there is a decibel threshold that is exceeded, or a decibel change that is considered excessive based upon the receptor definition (in this case, a "park"), then mitigation might be required. Although the park doesn't currently exist, it has been platted. The project team will assume development of the property as a park in the analysis.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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Member of Friends of Kickapoo Creek, JW Audubon Society, Sugar Grove Nature Center, Grand Prairie Master Naturalists, Parklands Foundation, and Illinois Prairie Wild Ones.

*East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
125 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820*

Hello East Side Highway Environmental Assessment Group:

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land." Aldo Leopold

Although I don't believe we need the eastside highway at all and that this process should stop, I understand that this option is not tenable at this time. Hence, with the understanding that there will be plans for a future eastside highway, I offer my comments, ideas, and advice.

I encourage you to keep your commitment to a route for the 'eastside highway' that does not impact or minimizes the impact on the main branches and significant tributaries of Kickapoo Creek and Money Creek in eastern McLean County, Illinois.

With the runoff from pavement and agriculture fields already causing significant degradation of the water quality in these streams, it is imperative to maintain and improve our vigilance of protection for these important natural features of our region.

As presented in the plan/report (excerpted and presented below) from the IEPA project regarding the Grove Residential Development, Kickapoo Creek has its headwaters just north of this development and at this point, "Kickapoo Creek is essentially a system of second and third order drainage ditches. The stream has been channelized entirely, receives extensive tile drain discharge, and is surrounded by row crops grown to the top of the bank."

And because of residential growth and the resulting increase in pavement, the water quality has decreased, with significant negative attributes," including fecal coliform bacteria, sediment, phosphorus, and dissolved oxygen."

Development in the eastern portion of the Bloomington/Normal area is expected to threaten water resources in the future due to "increased rates of runoff, construction erosion, increased nutrients from housing infrastructure, and landscaping."

So, with a quality status that is already less than ideal, adding additional highway crossings to Kickapoo Creek and/or a close parallel path with the creek, these will just add more pollutants and degrade the water quality even further.

Please pursue strategies to avoid additional impairments to this important watercourse in McLean County.

Response:

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis evaluation of alternate alignments. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, number of stream crossings, and acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Assessment cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality will be investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration. A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Comment 1

Jerry, a repeating question I am getting from residents is whether there is a rule, regulation, guideline, etc, that indicates an East Side Highway cannot be built within XX number of feet from a Neighborhood Park. Eagle View residents are wondering if it is "legal" to build the most westerly option so close to the platted 14.5 acre park (820 feet?).

Thanks for your help with this question.

Comment 2

Jerry, Can you or a member of your staff answer this question. Several neighbors are asking. Thank-you.

Response:

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you. We've been getting many comments on the alternatives since our Public Information Meeting on the 11th; many from neighborhoods on the east side. The comment period ends on the 25th (today).

Regarding your question below, we provide the following.

There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a Freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that must be considered as we move forward in the analysis. There are guidelines established in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – Title 23 – Highways, which address constructive impacts to parks. A constructive impact is a not a direct physical impact, but an impact resultant of adjacent or nearby construction. An example of a constructive impact would be noise. If there is a decibel threshold that is exceeded, or a decibel change

that is considered excessive based upon the receptor definition (in this case, a "park"), then mitigation might be required. Although the park doesn't currently exist, it has been platted. The project team will assume development of the property as a park in the analysis.

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 5, 2012



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Please see the attached documents for McLean County Farm Bureau's comments on the proposed Eastside Highway.



"Dedicated to Progressive Agriculture"

2243 Westgate Drive, Suite 501 Bloomington, Illinois 61705 (309)663-6497 fax (309)820-1790 www.mclfb.org

January 25, 2012

East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
125 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Re: Proposed Routes for the East Side Highway

Agriculture is a significant contributor to the local economy in McLean County. The county boasts some of the most productive soil in the world according to the soil productivity indexes calculated by the University of Illinois and we consistently top the charts in total production of corn and soybeans for the United States. In 2010 alone, McLean County farmers sold \$388.7 million in corn and soybeans.

McLean County Farm Bureau is a member organization that represents 65% of the farmers and farmland owners in McLean County, Illinois. As an organization, we strive to serve the best interest of our members by protecting their economic well being and enhancing the quality of farm family life.

Members of our board of directors and standing committees include road commissioners, township and cemetery trustees, volunteer firemen, rural EMS personnel and drainage district representatives. This diverse group of individuals provides a broad base of knowledge about rural communities in McLean County and the consequences of the proposed East Side Highway for the economy, the environment and the quality of life for a vibrant urban-rural relationship.

The proposed East Side Highway would directly impact local farmers in the area and their ability to safely and efficiently produce crops. To minimize the negative effects on agriculture in our county, we strongly recommend the following:

- Minimize the number of acres taken out of production:
 - Use existing road ways, corridors, and section lines
 - Avoid cutting across land parcels diagonally
 - In designing access points for the highway, keep the footprint of exit and entrance points or ramps small
- Avoid the creation of landlocked parcels:
 - Maintain access to all land parcels so that farmers can continue to grow crops on the land
 - Design access points that do not create inaccessible land pockets
- Design ingress and egress points that allow farmers to safely and easily transport farm equipment across the highway
 - Consider the size and scale of modern farm equipment in designing crossings to avoid safety issues in the corridor

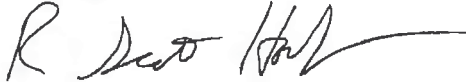
- An Arterial or Expressway design would be preferable to reduce traffic congestion caused by transportation of farm equipment
- In a Freeway design, the size of today's farm equipment would require a farmer to temporarily shut down both lanes of traffic on an overpass to safely transport it from one side of the highway to another
- Consider access and response times for rural fire and EMS services
 - Multiple fire and EMS services would cover portions of the proposed road (see map labeled Exhibit A)
 - Arterial or Expressway design would be preferable to prevent increased emergency response times caused by limited access points on the road

The threshold value used in the macro-analysis phase of the Eastside Highway Environmental Assessment for prime farmland was 800 acres. The remaining alternative routes remove between 745 and 771 acres of prime farmland from production. Removing 745 acres from production is equivalent to removing more than \$600,000 in gross sales of agricultural products from the local economy each year.

The proposed East Side Highway would have a direct and irrevocable impact on local family farmers and their ability to grow crops on the farmland in the corridor. We hope that if the proposed East Side Highway proceeds to design and construction, the economic importance of agriculture and the potential impacts on individual family farmers will not be overlooked.

Thank you for your consideration in this important matter.

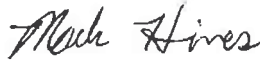
Sincerely,



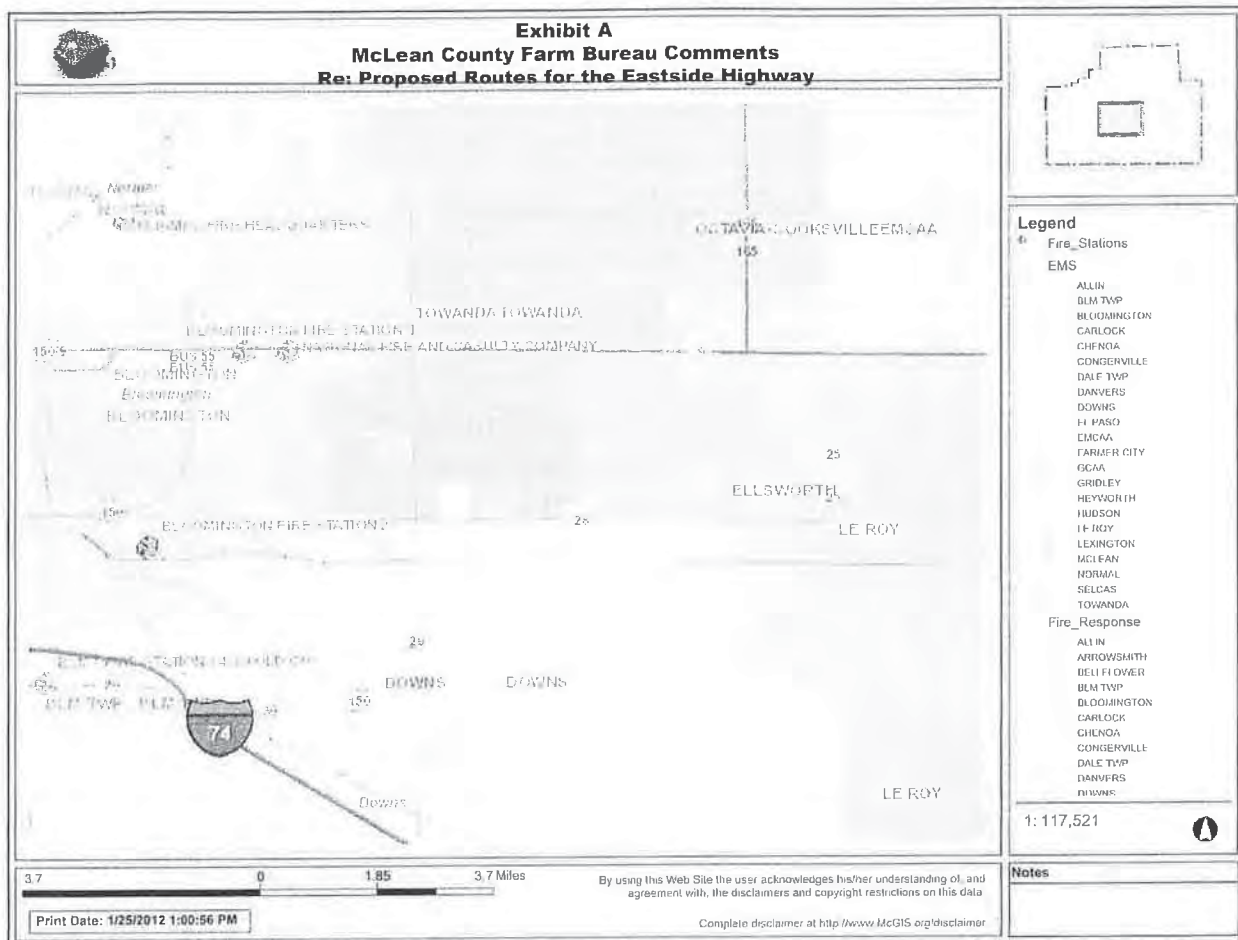
R. Scott Hoefft
President
McLean County Farm Bureau



Fred Grieder
Vice President
McLean County Farm Bureau



Mark Hines
Board Member
McLean County Farm Bureau



Response:

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

Minutes from the 3/6/12 meeting with the McLean County Farm Bureau will be forwarded upon their completion.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
 McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



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Definitely against the East Side Highway being within 1/2 mile of the west end of the Grove subdivision. As a homeowner on Kell Avenue, I and my neighbors would be negatively impacted with noise, pollution, additional traffic, and worst of all reduced home valuations. Of course lower assessed values mean less property tax revenue for Bloomington - can the city afford that?

It is obvious the future population estimate supporting this highway was WAY overstated as a way to justify the build. I think the East Side Highway would provide very little benefit to the local residents. We already use existing east-west roads to get to Bloomington & Normal, and Towanda Barnes is a good north-south route.

Response:

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

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Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 5, 2012



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I am a resident of the Eagle View neighborhood. We chose to live in this area due to the safe peaceful community that it could offer. I know you have received many responses related to the concern of safety if the highway is built as proposed. I agree that there will be significant safety issues as well as an exodus of people looking to get out of the effected neighborhoods. It will be a shame to have what was once a desirable area to be in to now be one that realtors are recommending potential buyers stay away from. I could write much more around these concerns, but I really just want to know why the need and who is going to benefit.

I attended the presentation and saw several slides about how it was going to relieve traffic for many areas of Bloomington. When I asked one of the Clark-Dietz representatives where the traffic relief would be, she kept mentioning simulations, but could not show me on a map anyone in Bloomington who would use the eastside highway. Based on that, it appears as though the plan is to create a bypass around Bloomington. How does that benefit anyone in Bloomington? It's a shame that this is being presented as a way to help the city, but when you ask how it helps there are no answers. I was told that the need is based on the predicted population growth by 2035, yet there was no answer as to where the new jobs are going come from. I would hope that real employers who have an interest in Bloomington are being consulted with, rather than using the results of a study by a consulting firm (who partnered with Clark-Dietz) that claims the conditions are right for about 60,000 additional jobs to be coming to Bloomington over the next 20 years. Again, I received no answer when I asked about this study. There was a map showing the expected population growth based on all the jobs coming and it showed growth on the east side, yet it didn't account for what the growth would look like with an expressway running through it. There were squares that showed projects of over 1000 residents expected to be in the area, yet the area would be wiped out by the highway if this proposal goes through. This really has a large, expensive smoke and mirrors feel to it.

Please do not go through with this plan for the eastside highway. Not only for the concerns to us, the residents on the east side, but more importantly since it will not benefit the taxpaying residents of Bloomington.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 5, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I, [REDACTED] oppose the current east-side interstate highway by pass plans because of the following reasons:

- Our family farmhouse has recently been acknowledged as an Illinois Centennial Farm. Our family has the original United States Land Grant Document signed by President Polk dated in the 1840's.
- "The Centennial Farm Program was established to honor the generations of farmers who have worked to maintain family farms in Illinois. Each Centennial Farm designee is a link to America's heritage and a reminder that the family farm remains a viable entity in today's agriculture." Illinois Department of Agriculture, 2012.
- Our property is situated at the Southwest corner of the bypass, north of I-74 and on the east side of County road 1750 east; therefore this proposed bypass plan would take our west side 50 acres and land-lock any access to the family homestead and remaining tillable land.
- In addition, there are two steel buildings, two detached garages, three grain bins, and lastly, a barn that was built in the 1860's still in usable condition and a second house that is also in good repair. Approximately 200 trees surround the homestead.



Many of these trees are 100 plus years old.

- *In the mid 1960's the State of Illinois split the Bozarth farm taking around 13 acres of farm land when constructing I-74. When this happened, the construction of I-74 removed the south access lane to the farm. The State then built a lane on the north side from County Road 1750 East, which runs east along the railroad tracks to the homestead. This lane is a mile long and is the only access to the farm. The proposed bypass plan would take out this lane and leave no access to the Bozarth farm.*

Thank you so much for your time and consideration to this very important matter.

Response:

Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Impacts to existing agriculture were an important consideration in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. As corridors were developed with the Community Working Group (CWG), alternatives were created that paralleled existing roads or tract lines to the greatest extent possible taking into account avoidance of other features. Minimizing impacts included effects on the splitting of farm parcels in addition to access to the remaining parcels. Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

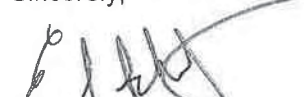
A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access and farm access.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The resources analyzed in the Alignment Evaluation phase included forested areas. There are some trees impacted by the remaining alignments, however, there are no heavily forested areas impacted; heavily forested areas (such as areas north of Downs and forested strips along streams) were avoided as much as possible when alternatives were aligned. Trees were not found to be a differentiating criterion in the alignment selection process. Both IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have policies on landscaping for proposed projects that include replacing trees that are lost as part of the roadway construction. Additionally, a second Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction. It would be applicable to discuss tree impacts, mitigation, or landscaping in these group meetings.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

My strong preference is to keep the road as far east as possible, as I live in Eagle View South neighborhood. I am not excited about having a freeway (or other major road) close to my house, so further away is better.

Response:

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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April 6, 2012

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on January 11, 2012. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I am a homeowner in The Grove at Kickapoo Creek subdivision.

I am opposed to east-west highway alternatives that were presented at the public informational meeting on January 11.

Throughout the presentation the speaker explained that many of the proposed routes were eliminated because of the high number of home/land owners that would be impacted.

While the current proposed routes would not take property from any Grove homeowner, I would argue that having a highway and an interchange that close to the subdivision would be ultimately be worse.

Property values and quality of life for everyone in that subdivision would be severely impacted. Those homeowners would not be compensated like those whose home/land would be bought by the state.

Every homeowner in the Grove within 1000 feet of that highway should be considered for same compensation as those who have property/homes that the State would need to purchase to build the highway.

If proposed highway sites remain in consideration, then the cost to purchase homes in the Grove that would about the highway and interchange, as well as providing a buffer zone (with trees) for the remaining homes, should be factored into the cost.

I concur with many, if not all, of the other objections raised.

Thank you for considering my objection.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

Procedures for land acquisition will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and the IDOT Land Acquisition Procedures Manual. The policies detail when compensation to properties with proximity impacts is appropriate. Most land acquisition activities will occur during Phase II design, after the Environmental Assessment has been completed.

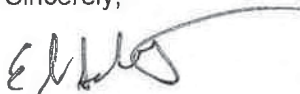
A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction. It would be applicable to discuss landscaping in these group meetings.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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April 6, 2012



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What I don't understand is why a "bypass" is going to go thru the middle of the expected growth area and have "at grade" intersections, forcing the traffic to make multiple stops while trying to bypass the area. Why not put it outside the expected growth area and build overpasses to allow the traffic to flow without the stops. As a resident of the Grove on Kell Ave, I also do not look forward to having the onramp 50 yards from my front door. We moved to the Grove specifically because it was quiet and expected the property values to go up as it grew. Now I'm worried we won't be able to recover our investment at all if there's going to be a loud highway just across the street and traffic backed up trying to get thru two intersections to cross Towanda-Barnes and get to work.

Thanks, just my 2 cents.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). The expressway (such as US 51 south of Bloomington), given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy, has no advantages over a freeway option. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This would create an unsafe condition in the variance of speeds. This condition could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value. The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed

abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric S. Schmitt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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Dear Members of the Clark-Dietz Team,

I am writing in regards to the planned highway on the Eastside of Bloomington. As a new resident to the eastside of Bloomington (and to the city), a concerned mother, and registered nurse, I am deeply concerned with the remaining two alternatives. After attending the public meetings in August 2011 and just recently in January, I fail to understand how the two alternatives were decided upon. In the initial screening criteria, objective one, bullet point three reads, "Does it divide or isolate a neighborhood or community?" If I am not mistaken, one alternative runs directly through Harvest Point neighborhood, dividing the neighborhood and isolating it from the rest of the community. Both alternatives run dangerously close to the three neighborhoods lining the eastside: Eagle View, The Grove, and Harvest Point.

Speaking of danger, there are hundreds of young families and children residing in the path of the planned alternatives. My concern lies not only with the compromised safety from being so close to a busy highway in the form of traffic accidents, but the long-term effects of pollution and poor air quality. Furthermore, increased activity so close to residential areas brings the threat of strangers and wonderers in the form of predators close to our children. I say this because I have personally experienced, not one but two encounters with threatening strangers who have found their way to my childhood home, which was approximately one fourth of a mile from a highway. Police were called both times.

I understand the potential benefits the highway may bring through new businesses and job creation; however, I am concerned about the property value of three neighborhoods only feet away from the two remaining alternatives. I have spoken with several neighbors who are so concerned with the aforementioned points (and several others I have not mentioned), they are willing to relocate (myself included). How will this affect the economic state of the eastside then? Speaking of economics, I am

incredibly concerned about the state of financial distress Illinois is currently under. Is this the time to be spending valuable tax dollars on studies and planning of a controversial highway?

I am not asking for you to cancel the project, for I understand that is not plausible in the eyes of those who are in charge of this project. However, I am asking for your reconsideration on the location. Please reconsider taking this out of the eastside residents' backyards by moving it further west. Please consider our safety, our health, and our economic integrity. If the highway is truly for growth, allow room for the city to "grow" east before planning to place a highway in such an area that it will stifle the growth.

Thank-you for your time. I hope you will take time to consider our concerns.

Response:

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)" Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many types of potential impacts of a chosen alignment, such as acquisition of property or buildings for right-of-way, increased traffic noise, community impacts, and changes in air quality.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

Property valuation is determined from a variety of factors, and can be determined using multiple methods. The most common valuation method is the sales comparison method, which evaluates property value to comparable properties. The performance of the regional and local real estate markets is a reflection of housing demand factors such as income, employment, interest rates, and population, and is a large determinant of property valuation change. Variations in residential property values reflect differences within housing and neighborhood characteristics. Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. Some research finds property values benefit simply from nearby public infrastructure investment. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. Some properties may see an increase in property value due to the improved accessibility of the properties. Other properties may see little or no change in property value.

The Environmental Assessment will identify and potentially mitigate noise, air quality, and visual impacts due to the ESH.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

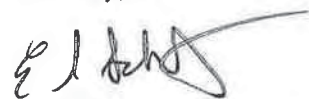
The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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Good morning.

As a member of a household dramatically impacted by the proposed bypass, I attended the public meeting on January 11, 2012. I was discouraged to find that all remaining options utilize a south-end connection with I-74 that will require the loss of my home. I live on a family farm; my grandparents moved in on my mother's first birthday in 1947. The new bypass would not only eliminate my home, which is an investment and my long-term housing, but also so much profitable farm ground on our land and on several adjacent farms. One of these is the Bozarth farm, which was given the "Centennial Farm" designation in December of 2011. My parents tenant farmed for the Bozarth's for about 30 years. This farm has a beautiful grove of black walnut trees, as well as an historic home that has been in the Bozarth family for several generations.

Personal impact aside, I have not seen sufficient evidence to indicate the true need for an eastside bypass. Maintain the roads that currently serve. None are flowing at or over capacity. I would expect that at some point the expansion of the city will need to move to the west and/or southwest sides of town.

Please do not assume that the route of "minimal impact" still does not have a maximum impact on those 6 or 7 families. This home is not only of vast sentimental value; it is my home for the rest of my life. My out-of-state siblings have been looking into returning to the area because they love Central Illinois. They wish to build homes on our property as well.

Response:

The project team understands the emotional ties that people have to their homes, especially if those homes have been in the family for multiple generations. Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of

prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The increase in traffic within the study area by the year 2035 has been carefully modeled. The projected increase in traffic volume within the study area by the year 2035 has been modeled using travel demand software that is certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Existing traffic data was obtained from IDOT, McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, and was supplemented with an origin-destination survey of the traveling public.

The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates have been refined in light of the current economic downturn. From this, a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. The study team will incorporate any new data into the model as it becomes available. The FHWA will also be reviewing the traffic projections as they are refined for the alternatives carried forward. A project of this magnitude takes significant time and planning. If we do not start working today, the most effective alignment may be blocked by development in the future when an ESH is vital to accommodate growth.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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One more day to get your thoughts over to Clark-Dietz. I've seen some really good notes so far — articulate and heart felt. Here is mine.

I do NOT support the East Side Highway. There are numerous reasons we should not move forward with the construction of this freeway.

I have reviewed information on Clark-Dietz website and have spoken with many neighbors in Eagle View, Harvest Pointe, and The Grove. Here's what I learned:

At the public meeting in August, Clark-Dietz indicated the East Side Highway would alleviate east-west traffic in Bloomington. It would not. The East Side Highway is an 8—mile stretch of highway to connect I 55 in the North to I 74 in the South. This highway will be used for commuter traffic around Bloomington, and not by those of us who live here. We on Bloomington's east end, will not drive on a highway to access the west end. Nor will those on the west end travel the freeway to get to the east end. We will still travel on Ft. Jesse, GE, Empire, and Ireland Grove.

Clark-Dietz claims the highway will bring business in to Bloomington. In reality, this Highway was previously called a Bypass. After pushback from Bloomington residents indicating a road "bypassing" Bloomington wouldn't really bring business in to Bloomington, the "Bypass" reference was changed to a "highway" or "corridor" – though no change in its location or structure was made.

This freeway will have a negative impact on west end businesses. There is already a high-speed connection of I 55 and I 74 that runs west of Bloomington. Businesses that rely on this traffic for their livelihood will suffer when traffic is rerouted to the east.

Clark-Dietz indicated in their presentation on January 12 at NCHS that residents are considered impacted only if they are within 250 feet of the freeway. That is... less than one city block from a freeway.

Clark-Dietz indicated in their presentation that they took care to ensure the two remaining proposals did not impact or isolate any neighborhoods. In reality, the freeway runs 820 feet along the entire length of the Eagle View neighborhoods (except at the Ft Jesse off ramp 350 feet away), directly through Harvest Pointe, and completely isolates The Grove from the rest of Bloomington. Furthermore, a C-D employee denied there was even a neighborhood located at The Grove.

Clark-Dietz indicated in their presentation that construction of a freeway next to our neighborhoods will help control sprawl. That people will want to fill in the undeveloped land between existing residences and the freeway with new residential neighborhoods. I don't think so. Living next to a freeway is not desirable. This might, in fact, push residential growth in another direction -- even perhaps to other communities. I know I will move my household elsewhere if this freeway is built.

Clearly, there are health issues associated with living right on top of a freeway. I moved to Bloomington from Bakersfield, California. Bakersfield sits between two freeways connecting Sacramento to Los Angeles. It has the worst air quality in the country. It is because of that terrible air quality that I was delighted to move here -- where the air was so clean. What studies has Clark-Dietz conducted or relied upon to assure residents there is no negative health impact?

Clark-Dietz' communication on the East Side Highway has been lacking. Although they say they have had many public meetings regarding the freeway, the only notice of these meetings was via The Pantagraph. Only a handful of Eagle View residents were aware of the possibility that a highway would run near the neighborhood. We have lived here four years and the first we heard of the proposed highway was in August 2011. I was reasonably certain that they would not have selected the route directly next to and through neighborhoods in Bloomington. In addition, they are fully aware of the neighborhoods affected by this freeway. C-D could have accessed tax assessor records to identify the names and addresses of affected homeowners and sent notices directly to them. The City of Bloomington did just that recently to put us on notice of a Public Meeting at CIRA regarding neighborhood issues.

Furthermore, it seems unlikely that the City of Bloomington would have annexed this land and supported its development had city officials been aware they were actually encouraging prospective buyers to purchase their dream homes a couple of blocks from a freeway. I know the builders and realtors were unaware of this freeway.

Eagle View Park is on the Master Parks Plan for construction in the near future. This is a 14.5-acre park that is located in the southeast section of the neighborhood. Your proposal places a freeway within two blocks of a neighborhood park, where young children will be spending time. I suspect there might be a zoning restriction or other ordinance against constructing this highway next to a park.

And last, but not least, is the cost. Spending \$300,000,000 on a short stretch of freeway that is unnecessary for most, and so detrimental to Bloomington, is fiscally irresponsible. \$300,000,000 could be better spent elsewhere.

Please...go with the NO BUILD option.

Response:

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on

Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a “bypass” would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The Initial Screening included the criterion “Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community? (Is the neighborhood or community divided into 2 or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)” Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the *IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual*. Although subdivisions including The Grove may meet the definition of a neighborhood, the remaining alternatives do not divide or isolate these neighborhoods. The remaining alternatives provide the residents of The Grove access to Bloomington and Normal via Ireland Grove Road and do not isolate the neighborhood from community facilities such as Benjamin School.

Historic trends generally show that development, including residential development, is enhanced rather than stifled by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington Normal job and commercial centers. The impacts of the remaining alternatives to the socioeconomic and human environment will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Compatibility with existing and future plans use plans, including planned residential development, is considered during the analysis.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation “conformity” requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio stations, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. Newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information will be added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in fall 2013.

An east side transportation facility has been studied and considered since the early 1990's. Previous 2002 and 2009 studies are available for download at: <http://www.mcplan.org/transportation/eastside/eastside.html>.

There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a Freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the next stage of analysis, the Environmental Assessment Analysis. There are guidelines established in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – Title 23 – Highways, which address constructive impacts to parks. A constructive impact is not a direct physical impact, but an impact resultant of adjacent or

nearby construction. An example of a constructive impact would be noise. If there is a decibel threshold that is exceeded, or a decibel change that is considered excessive based upon the receptor definition (in this case, a "park"), then mitigation might be required. Although the park doesn't currently exist, it has been platted. The project team will assume development of the property as a park in the analysis.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project. A detailed safety evaluation of the alternatives will be included in the Environmental Assessment. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to the infrastructure to accommodate that growth or the result will be congestion, and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, an access controlled freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility, while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools and parks will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



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We would like to submit the attached comments regarding the proposed Bloomington-Normal eastside bypass. Thank you.

To Whom It May Concern,

As a life-long citizen of Bloomington-Normal, I am writing to you to express my concerns and opposition of the proposed eastside highway bypass. My husband and I are homeowners at 1501 Kell Avenue, part of the Grove subdivision in east Bloomington. We are located just north of Ireland Grove Road and approximately 0.8 miles east of Towanda-Barnes Road. Our home, as indicated by the red star in the images below, backs up to the farmland where a portion of the eastside bypass is being proposed. The bypass would be within several hundred feet from our backyard.

We oppose the project and request that the no-build option be selected. Based on the feedback I have heard from other citizens, our family is not alone in our opposition. Actually, I have yet to hear any pro-bypass support, other than from those who are involved in and/or supporting the study.

Based on the research cited below, the bypass will likely have significant negative health impacts upon families living nearby it. Increased air pollution from highways and freeways has been linked to respiratory illnesses, especially among children and the elderly. Studies have also shown an increase in autism among children living close to highways and freeways. According to U.C. Davis, children that live within 1,000 feet of a freeway, interstate, or highway are 86% more likely to be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Noise pollution is another concern. Studies have shown that continuous exposure to road traffic noise negatively impacts a person's ability to work, learn, rest, relax and sleep. Given how close our home is to the proposed bypass, we would most definitely be affected.

When our family made the decision to build a home at the Grove, we looked forward to the environmental health and beauty of the surrounding farmland, Kickapoo Creek and the wilderness preserve. The City of Bloomington, along with the Grove developers, have committed much time and money to enhance these aspects. The bypass would ruin the environmental progress that has been made. My children, ages 4 and 12, are upset that the cows on the Bozarth farm would no longer graze along our backyard fence.

The continuation of the eastside bypass project is financially irresponsible. The state of Illinois and local taxpayers cannot afford this expense. A ridiculous amount of money has already been spent on the study conducted by Clark-Dietz...and for what purpose? Their recommendations look very similar to the options explored in the early 2000's.

I also do not have confidence in the population projections used in the study. I feel exaggerated growth rates were used, which reflect a time when job opportunities were more prevalent. Although the Bloomington-Normal area continues to grow at a moderate pace, I am not convinced that the bypass would add enough financial benefit to justify the expense. When you add in the negative implications, the ROI is even more offset.

Please take these concerns to heart and make the right decision to not build an eastside bypass. However, if you do move forward with the plans, please provide me with advanced warning so I can list my home with a realtor.

From proposed alignments 124 & 126



From proposed alignments 125 & 127



Sources:

1. *St. Vincent, Allison, et al. Spatial and Temporal Distribution of Highway-Generated Air Pollution in a Residential Urban Neighborhood: Comparison of Monitoring and Dispersion Modeling Results. World Environmental and Water Resources Congress 2010: Challenges of Change. Proceedings of the World Environmental and Water Resources Congress (2010).*
2. *Dales, R., et al. The Influence of Living Near Roadways on Spirometry and Exhaled Nitric Oxide in Elementary Schoolchildren. Environmental Health Perspectives. Volume 116, Issue 110, pp. 1423-1427 (2008).*
3. *Jenkins, M.A. and Juergen Pahl. Measurement of freeway noise and community response. J. Acoust. Soc. Am. Volume 58, Issue 6, pp. 1222-1231 (1975).*
4. *The CHARGE Study. U.C. Davis M.I.N.D. Institute. www.mindinstitute.org.*
5. *Ouis D. Exposure to nocturnal road traffic noise: Sleep disturbance its after effects. Noise Health. Volume 1, Issue 11, pp. 36 (1999).*

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

The detailed noise assessment will identify all sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. The assessment will identify existing noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. Where noise walls are found to be both reasonable and feasible, the public and immediate property owners will be notified. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed abatement measures. The viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from residents who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The air quality analysis studies the potential of the ESH to increase air pollutants to levels above the criteria established by the USEPA.

It is important to consider that the ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 land use plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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I realize you're probably getting numerous comments on your design, so I'll attempt to be as direct and concise as possible in my comments:

First, I significantly favor the no build option. I think there are much better ways to use our federal, state, and local dollars. I've yet to meet a resident in favor of this project.

I've lived in the area over 30 years and am greatly saddened by the selected path on the southern connection to 74 based on numerous factors:

- *This area should be a treasure to McLean County when you consider the number of centennial farms located in this area. Some have been designated, some were just awarded the designation, and some are in the process of applying.*

If the road process must continue, I'm very confused and disappointed to see that the D4 option was not the selected option. Consider the following:

- *This option better follows property lines to 74 and would reduce the number of misshaped pieces of farm ground that result from the D2 option.*
- *It would pass the commercial area by Corn Belt vs additional residence areas*
- *The D2 option would destroy 3 homes, cut diagonally across numerous farms leaving odd shaped and wasted pieces of property, blocked road access, and also cuts into a centennial farm. Given this number of issues, I believe the D2 option would be a better route that would also push the road further east.*
- *During the discussion, I never heard a clear understanding as to why D4 was removed. At one point, it was mentioned that it would destroy the recently built Victory church.....but the church is nowhere near that location*

General comments:

- *The road way still seems like it could be moved farther east since there is already development east of the road today.....let alone 20-30 years from now.*
- *Springfield, Champaign, Decatur, Peoria are all cities of similar size of Blm/N, and they do not have loops around their entire city. Why do we need to have one here?*
- *You do have other alternatives that will conserve our prime and important farmland better than the one you have chosen on the south.*

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

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Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section D-1 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to disproportionately high impacts to residences.
- Section D-3 was eliminated during the Macro Analysis because of the skewed curve it contained and because it offered no advantages over Section D-2. Skews are points of intersection at angles less than 90° that present safety issues.
- Section D-4 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis because of its skewed crossing of Towanda-Barnes Road and US 150.
- Section D-5 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

As identified in the project's Purpose and Need, the East Side Highway is being studied to determine a location that will accommodate planned growth and improve access and mobility on the east side. It is not being developed to serve as a bypass or to complete a loop around Bloomington and Normal.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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- *This area should be a treasure to McLean County when you consider the number of centennial farms located in this area. Some have been designated, some were just awarded the designation, and some are in the process of applying.*

If the road process must continue, I'm very confused and disappointed to see that the D4 option was not the selected option. Consider the following:

- *This option better follows property lines to 74 and would reduce the number of misshaped pieces of farm ground that result from the D2 option.*
- *It would pass the commercial area by Corn Belt vs additional residence areas*
- *The D2 option would destroy 3 homes, cut diagonally across numerous farms leaving odd shaped and wasted pieces of property, blocked road access, and also cuts into a centennial farm. Given this number of issues, I believe the D2 option would be a better route that would also push the road further east.*
- *During the discussion, I never heard a clear understanding as to why D4 was removed. At one point, it was mentioned that it would destroy the recently built Victory church.....but the church is nowhere near that location*

General comments:

- *The road way still seems like it could be moved farther east since there is already development east of the road today.....let alone 20-30 years from now.*
- *Springfield, Champaign, Decatur, Peoria are all cities of similar size of Blm/N, and they do not have loops around their entire city. Why do we need to have one here?*
- *You do have other alternatives that will conserve our prime and important farmland better than the one you have chosen on the south.*

Response:

The No Build Alternative is included in this study. The No Build Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it does not improve north-south or east-west mobility in the study area, nor improve access to the regional transportation system. However, the No Build Alternative is carried through the Environmental Assessment and serves as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives. If, in the course of the Environmental Assessment, all of the remaining alignments are found to have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need, the Federal and State resource agencies could select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

The current study in progress is an Environmental Assessment. The funds to pay for the Environmental Assessment were appropriated by the State of Illinois through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill. They are being administered locally through McLean County who holds the contract with the consulting engineers. The funds cannot be used for any other purpose than to fund this Environmental Assessment.

No funding for Phase II (Detailed Engineering design) has been approved. No funding for Phase III (Construction) has been approved. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment) study is to assist in deciding if the project should go forward. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from local agencies. Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

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- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

Numerous alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alignments were developed and evaluated. These alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons, including the inability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, which is to accommodate growth on the east side and address both

local and regional mobility and access. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives are less compatible with future land use plans and may encourage sprawl or other unintended negative land use consequences.

As identified in the project's Purpose and Need, the East Side Highway is being studied to determine a location that will accommodate planned growth and improve access and mobility on the east side. It is not being developed to serve as a bypass or to complete a loop around Bloomington and Normal.

Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

April 6, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]

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Proposed highway is very detrimental to rural residential developments. Residents of Terrace Lawn, Charterwood Farms, and other subdivisions do not want road so close. Could road be located closer to high electric lines west of proposed location? If road is built, make it as low impact as possible with no elevated overpasses, only at grade intersections. If built to freeway standards eliminate south Towanda Barnes intersection. This intersection is not needed so close to Hwy 150 intersection.

Response:

The proximity of the alternatives to existing and planned residential development was considered during the alternative evaluation process. As the Environmental Assessment process goes forward, both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH will be analyzed in detail. This analysis will include studying direct impacts such as acquisition of residences, and farmland conversion as well as potential impacts to land use, noise levels, air quality, community impacts, and water quality.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

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- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

The term "Grade Separation" refers to two transportation facilities (i.e. roadways, railroads) crossing each other and one is elevated over the other. There is no connection between the facilities. They each operate independently of the other, and their individual continuity is preserved. Generally, for grade separations the minor road crosses over the major road since the minor road typically has fewer lanes. This results in a less costly bridge. In the context of this project, at this time it is anticipated there will be grade separations at the following lesser crossroads: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Oakland Avenue (1300N), and General Electric Road (1500N), and Old Route 66. There would also be grade separations of the ESH with the Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern railroads, and potentially any abandoned railroads.

Preliminary Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following freeway interchange spacing standards. As the project moves forward, interchange geometry will continue to be refined to address access needs and minimize impacts. The configurations presented at the fourth Public Information Meeting were preliminary.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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January 12, 2011

Information for January 11, 2012 Comment Sheets addressing proposal for Eastside Roadway.

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1. Parcel of land on Zimmerman/Jackson
2. Parcel of land on Harold Bozarth (128 AC) On December 2011, this farm was granted prime and important farmland, a Centennial Farm. This family lost their lane to Township Road 850 when Route 74 was built. They have a blacktop lane over 1 mile long to gain access to Road 1750 from the 2 houses and farm buildings. This would be blocked.
3. Parcel of land owned by Franzie and Dorothy Loepp.

The following 3 parcels are on the west side of Road 1750 E and will be blocked.

1. Parcel of land on Bob and Bonnie Mitchell (35 AC)
2. Parcel of land on Steve and Dan Bozarth (109 AC)
3. Parcel of land on Hughart Family (92 AC)

The following farmsteads will be eliminated:

1. Larry and Louise Reeser farmstead and American Cell Tower with AT&T and Verizon.
2. Bob and Bonnie Mitchell farmstead in family since 1947
3. Mary Raycraft farmstead just south of Route 150.

We support the No Build option, or D4 or S2M Route from Route 150 to Route 74. The D4 or S2M option does NOT do the following:

1. Does not land block any parcels of land
2. Does not eliminate any farmsteads
3. Does not cross or block any prime and important farmland (like the Harold Bozarth Centennial Farm)
4. Does not have any Cell Towers (like the Reeser Farm)

This highway was introduced as a farmer friendly road initially. At the last meeting we heard it would be a bypass (freeway) with only limited entrances and exits, making it very inconvenient to get from one side of the road to the other side.



January 12, 2012

Eric Schmitt
102 S. Towanda-Barnes Road
Bloomington, IL 61705

RE: Eastside Highway Proposal

Dear Mr. Schmitt,

I'm writing to you on the behalf of the Harold D. Bozarth Irrv Trust. My sister Denise Smith serves as a Co-Trustee with me. Additional, the Trust consists of my two brothers Randy Bozarth, Doug Bozarth and sister Dee David.

Our concerns are related to the current proposed traffic clover that intersects Interstate 74 and 1750 N. East Road. This would land lock approx. 135 acres of our farm that includes 2 homes, 3 barns and destroy a mile long private road that is our only access.

The family home was built in the 1860s and is in very good condition and currently is used by the family. The 2nd home is a 1930s Sears Roebuck home currently lived in, also.

Our Great-Great Aunt Emma Bozarth Coleman passed the farm to our Great-Great Grandfather John Bozarth who passed it our Great Grandfather J.O. Bozarth who passed it to our Grandfather Harold D. Bozarth. Our father Robert Foster Bozarth is deceased. We are the fifth generation owners and intend to preserve the family farm.

Interstate 74 divided our property in the 60s. We still retain acreage south of I-74.

We understand the challenges of planning toward the future, but we feel there are viable alternatives that would better benefit all involved on the south end of this project.

Mr. Schmitt thanks for your time and considerations. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Also, enclosing information that notes the Bozarth Farm's Centennial status.

Sincerely,





Pat Quinn, Governor
James Larkin, Acting Director

Bureau of Marketing and Promotion
State Fairgrounds • P.O. Box 19281 • Springfield, IL 62704-0281 • 217/782-6676 • TDD 217/824-8858 • Fax 217/524-6980

12/2/2011

Douglas Bozarth
BOZARTH Family Farm
809 Longmeadow Lane
Desoto, TX 75115

Dear Douglas Bozarth:

The Illinois Department of Agriculture is pleased to inform you that your Centennial Farm application has been approved. The parcel of land described in your application will be designated hereafter as a Centennial Farm.

We feel that the accomplishment of earning this distinction deserves special recognition. Therefore, the Department of Agriculture is presenting to you, or the person to whom the Centennial Farm belongs, a certificate, signed by the Governor and the Director of Agriculture. A 2 X 2 ft sign has been enclosed to identify the farm as a Centennial Farm. We have also enclosed with this certificate and sign a press release that you may send to your local newspaper recognizing your farm as an Illinois Centennial Farm.

Congratulations to you, as you have helped to preserve one of the most basic elements of America's heritage – the family farm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Delayne R. Reeves".

Delayne R. Reeves
Centennial/Sesquicentennial Farms Coordinator

Enc.



CENTENNIAL FARM PROGRAM

Bozarth Farm

We hereby certify that this farm has achieved Centennial Farm status by remaining in the same family of lineal descendants 100 years or more. The farm has become an enduring testimonial to Illinois' rich agricultural heritage. The Centennial Farm Program recognizes the pride and determination of the generations who have labored to maintain this farm as an integral part of Illinois agriculture.

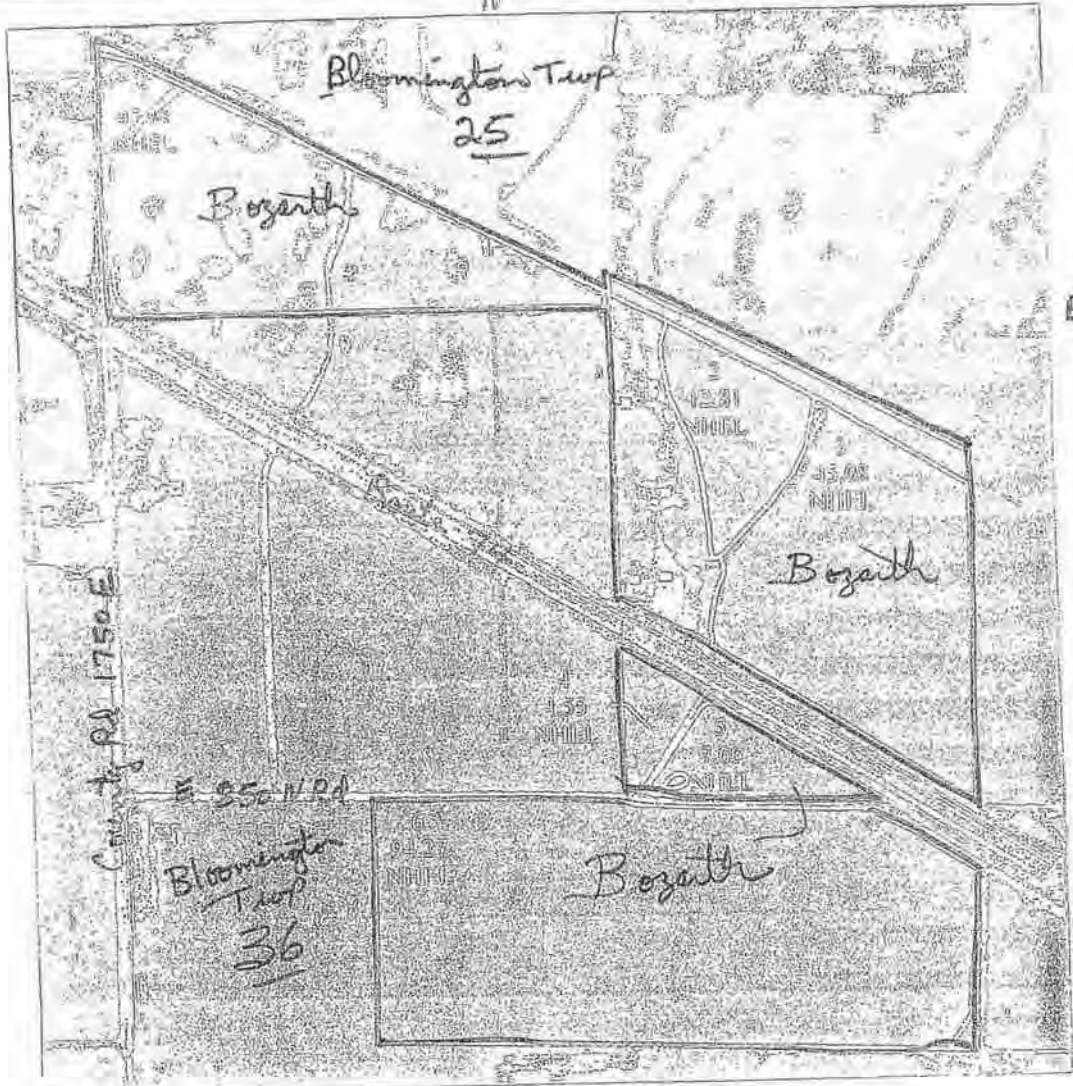
Signed this *2nd* day of *December*, 2011



Pat Quinn
Governor

James Johnston
Director of Agriculture

Harold D. Bozarth
Centennial Farm



United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
S
McLean County, IL

December 28, 2011

Farm: 11279
Tract: 3641

Bozarth Farm

- GIS_IL_CCE/WRP_P_11009
Wetland Determination Identifiers
- Restricted Use
 - Limited Restrictions
 - Exempt from Conservation Compliance Provisions

These symbols do not represent the size, shape or specific determination of the area.
Detailed maps for exact wetland boundaries are available upon request.
PRN-12-2012 10:16A FROM:WESTFALL

Response:

Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Impacts to existing agriculture were an important consideration in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. As corridors were developed with the Community Working Group (CWG), alternatives were created that paralleled existing roads or tract lines to the greatest extent possible taking into account avoidance of other features. Minimizing impacts included effects on the splitting of farm parcels in addition to access to the remaining parcels. Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

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A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access and farm access.

The alternatives were developed to minimize impacts to utilities. The locations of all utilities which could conflict with a roadway facility (such as power transmission lines, cell phone towers, sewage pump stations, etc.) were evaluated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis and will be further evaluated for the remaining alignments during the Environmental Assessment.

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The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to

provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety.

The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, is anticipated to include interchanges to provide access to and from the ESH and east-west connectivity, at approximately two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: US 150, Towanda Barnes Road (south of Cheney's Grove Road), Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), and Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N). It is anticipated there will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access at the other intermediate roads of: Cheney's Grove Road (approximately 1050N), Township Road 1300N, and General Electric Road (1500N). Specific interchange locations are still being studied.

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied as the ESH alternatives carried forward undergo detailed traffic modeling, and east-west roadway improvements will be identified in the Environmental Assessment and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

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Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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April 6, 2012

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Response:

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January 15, 2012

At the meeting this week, January 11, 2012, discussions centered on the main route, and the northern route, and not on the southern route. There was little if any talk about why at the August 18, 2011 meeting, there was a very direct route to 74 (D4 or S2M) and suddenly 2 diagonal routes across prime and important farmland had been added. The main proposal from Route 150 to Route 74 (D4 or S2M) went west of the Corn Belt Electric Office on the south side of 150, and east of two homes and a Christian School on the north side of 150, and a row of houses on the south side of 150. This proposed route (D4 or S2M) followed the property lines to interstate 74. There is an open area of at least 1,056 feet of open field between the Corn Belt Electric Offices and the next property, west on the south of 150. Jerry told my husband that he thought the direct route would be chosen. Imagine our surprise in getting the newsletter and finding one of the diagonal routes chosen. We heard this main route (D4) was eliminated because of Victory School. This school is across from the row of houses on Route 150. From the open space west of Corn Belt Electric, the school is an estimated 3,432 feet away. The highway at this location would not interfere with the school at all. The (D2) route is closer to the school than (D4) route was. The route that is on the maps now was eliminated many studies ago, what brought it back? Are you respecting prime and important farmland by cutting diagonally through all these properties?

The southern route (now D2) on the January 11 map destroys at least 3 farmsteads and buildings, and you have chopped up at least 6 farms and left fields in triangles and odd shapes. You have blocked people from access to a road, or are making it very difficult to get to their property, so that new access roads will need to be created. Where in all of this is your regard for prime and important farmland? You have sliced up a Centennial Farm into bits and pieces for the second time. It was butchered by construction of Interstate 74 many years ago.

Your initial projections of the growth of Bloomington/Normal are not valid any more in 2012. Growth has slowed considerably in these past 5 years. This was one of the driving factors for creating this highway.

This road was to be farmer friendly, and now we find, it is being called a highway /bypass. What does the Market Street Exit think about trucks and travelers staying on the east side if they are going to the east or Champaign, and missing their exit altogether? What about the lost revenue to the city? Springfield, Champaign, Decatur, Peoria are all cities of similar size of Blm/N, and they do not have loops around, their entire city. Why do we need to have one here?

We have farmed in this neighborhood for 46 years. Larry's parents moved to this area in the 1930's and owned farmland too. They had a family farm as we do. This land is valuable to us and it is a part of the legacy of our family. Land is valuable to each farmer no matter how long it has been in the family. Please respect the land as we do and do not chop our farms up into pieces. If you must have this road, which we feel is totally unnecessary, then stay on the boundary lines and don't chop up our farms. You do have other alternatives that will conserve our prime and important farmland better than the one you have chosen on the south.

Attached map.

enter search here .

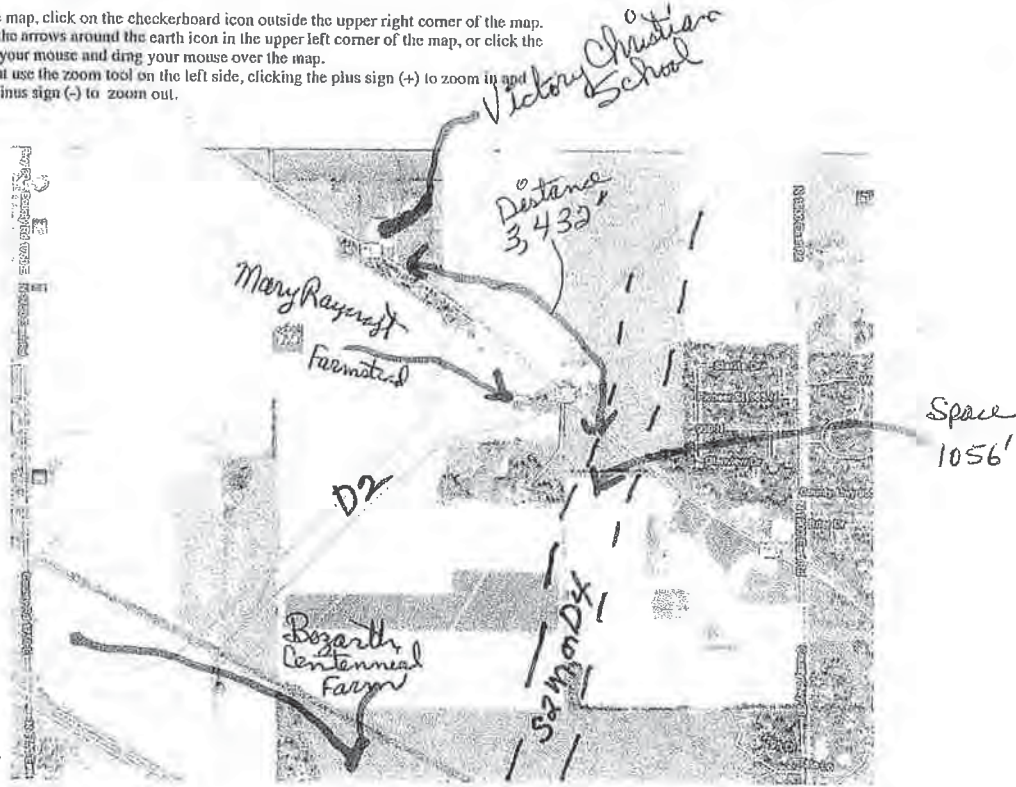
- Home/Overview
- Home
- Introduction about the Study
- Environmental and Cultural Resources
- Environmental and Cultural Resources
- Home

This explains the 2 routes I am talking about in my 1st paragraph,

*Louise Reiser
1-15-12*

Below is an interactive map of the Bloomington-Normal area. It contains four alignments remaining under consideration as of January 3, 2012. This map will continue to be updated as the project moves forward to display the range of alignments developed as well as environmental and cultural resources identified.

- To enlarge the map, click on the checkerboard icon outside the upper right corner of the map.
- To pan, click the arrows around the earth icon in the upper left corner of the map, or click the left button on your mouse and drag your mouse over the map.
- To zoom in/out use the zoom tool on the left side, clicking the plus sign (+) to zoom in and clicking the minus sign (-) to zoom out.



Interesting Infor

Did you know ...

Enlarge Map
Powered by ...

... the Bloomington-Normal area is home to a number of large employers, including State Farm Insurance, Country Insurance and Financial Services, Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc., and Illinois State University, among others.

What's New ... ?

Newsletter

- The third issue of the project newsletter has been issued. Please click [here](#) to download.

Public Meeting

- The fourth Public Information Meeting will be held on January 11, 2012 from 6-8pm at Normal Community High School at 3900 East Raab Road.

Alternative Development and Evaluation

Response:

Every effort is being made to minimize the number of residences and centennial farms directly impacted and to minimize the number of acres of prime farmland consumed. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences and farmland were eliminated during the alternative evaluation process.

Impacts to existing agriculture were an important consideration in both the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. As corridors were developed with the Community Working Group (CWG), alternatives were created that paralleled existing roads or tract lines to the greatest extent possible taking into account avoidance of other features. Minimizing impacts included effects on the splitting of farm parcels in addition to access to the remaining parcels. Farmland impacts were an important factor in the evaluation of potential alternatives in the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. These impacts included identifying total acres of prime and important farmland used for right-of-way in addition to severed tracts, and tracts with access change. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to farmland were eliminated. Refined agricultural impact analyses will occur during the Environmental Assessment Analysis. At that time, the alignments will be refined, the number of impacted farms will be determined in addition to number and acreage of landlocked parcels, uneconomical remnants, miles of adverse travel per tract, and tract severances. Access to residences and farm tracts will also be evaluated in detail.

An analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative induced impacts from the project on agricultural land, as well as other land uses, will be included in the Environmental Assessment. The process results in the selection of an alternative that minimizes impacts to farmland as well as many other environmental and socio-economic criteria.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) is being formed to address issues of land use and access management. Input will be sought on ways to address farm vehicle access and farm access.

The alternatives were developed to minimize impacts to utilities. The locations of all utilities which could conflict with a roadway facility (such as power transmission lines, cell phone towers, sewage pump stations, etc.) were evaluated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis and will be further evaluated for the remaining alignments during the Environmental Assessment.

There is one remaining alternate (section D-2) for the connection to Interstate 74 at the south end of the project. Section D-2 also allows for the connection of the ESH to Township Road 1750E south of I-74. Other alternative sections were considered in this area and were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Section D-1 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis due to disproportionately high impacts to residences.
- Section D-3 was eliminated during the Macro Analysis because of the skewed curve it contained and because it offered no advantages over Section D-2. Skews are points of intersection at angles less than 90° that present safety issues.
- Section D-4 was eliminated during the Alignment Analysis because of its skewed crossing of Towanda-Barnes Road and US 150.
- Section D-5 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-6 was eliminated during the Initial Screening because it divided or isolated neighborhoods near Downs.
- Section D-7 was eliminated during the Purpose and Need Evaluation because it did not provide adequate improvements to mobility.

The primary purpose of the ESH study is not to create a bypass or to complete a loop around Bloomington-Normal. The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a "bypass" would likely increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas, job centers and improved access to the interstate system. A detailed traffic model using accurate existing traffic data and traffic patterns will be developed for each proposed alternative to ensure that the alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will divert traffic from the existing west side interstate system or draw potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and

mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses. The effect of the ESH on existing businesses and socioeconomics will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) developed the 2035 Land Use Plan based upon historical growth trends in McLean County since 1970 and the expected growth in population and employment. Over this period of time the population in this area has grown at a rate of approximately 1.2% per year. The 2035 land use plan assumes a growth rate similar to this. The 2011 national forecast for all states and counties (Woods & Poole Economics) has been used to update the population and employment projections for the project area. This forecast cites Bloomington-Normal as an "area which (is) expected to have relatively rapid employment and population growth over the next three decades." It has been noted that the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 has caused employment to decline in McLean County, Illinois, and the nation. However, the area is already recovering and unemployment rate for the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (McLean County) is the lowest among all Illinois MSA's. The project team has been and will continue to update population and employment projections with the most current census data and employment trends to ensure the growth rates are credible. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. Should that growth not be realized, the construction schedule can be adjusted.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING #5

JUNE 19, 2013

NOTICE
EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the East Side Highway Steering Committee will hold a Public Information Meeting on Wednesday, June 19, 2013 at the Normal Community High School Auditorium at 3900 East Raab Road in Normal, Illinois. The meeting will be held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to present the remaining alternatives, and discuss the environmental and community impacts resulting from the alternatives. We will seek input from those in attendance regarding which alternative should be selected as the single preferred alternative to carry forward.

A presentation will be made at 6:10 PM and again at 7:10 PM. The presentations will be identical. The remainder of the meeting will be open-house format with opportunity to review exhibits. Project team staff will be available for discussion and questions.

A map of the remaining alternatives will be available on the project website (<http://www.eastsidehighway.com>) after the meeting. Persons with disability requiring special accommodations should contact Clark Dietz, Inc. (217-373-8900) to advise of planned attendance and needed accommodations.

East Side Highway Environmental Assessment Public Meeting Announcement



You are invited to attend an East Side Highway Public Information Meeting to be held on:

DATE

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

TIME

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

PLACE

Normal Community High School
3900 East Raab Road
Normal, Illinois

Purpose

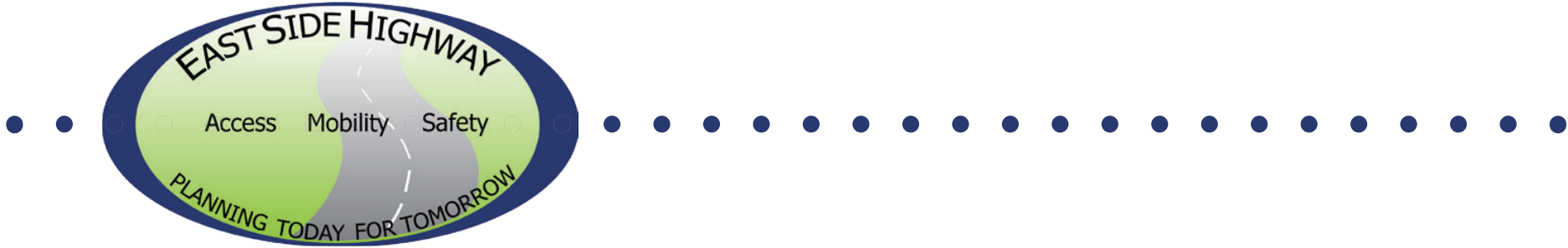
The purpose of the meeting is to review the alternative evaluation process, present the remaining alternatives, and seek public input on a Preferred Alternative.

A presentation will be given at 6:10 p.m. and 7:10 p.m. The content at each presentation will be identical. The presentation will include a review of the alternative evaluation process, description of the remaining alternatives, and identify the environmental and community impacts resulting from each of the remaining alternatives. The remainder of the meeting will be open-house format with opportunity to browse exhibits. Staff will be available for discussion and questions. Public input on a Preferred Alternative will be sought. Written comments will be taken at the meeting and by mail, email, or fax after the meeting. For more information, visit the website at www.eastsidehighway.com.

Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations should contact Mr. Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz at (217) 373-8900 to advise of planned attendance and needed accommodations.

East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
125 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE



VISIT

WWW.EASTSIDEHIGHWAY.COM



T

WELCOME!



DATE

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

AGENDA

An identical, brief presentation will be given at the following times:

6:10 p.m.

7:10 p.m.

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting is to review the alternative evaluation process, present the remaining alternatives, and seek public input on a Preferred Alternative.

AGENDA

1. Alternative Evaluation Process
2. Environmental Assessment Evaluation
3. Remaining Alternatives
4. Public Input on a Preferred Alternative



TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



PURPOSE & NEED

Purpose: Improve local and regional mobility and access that accommodates growth forecasted on east side

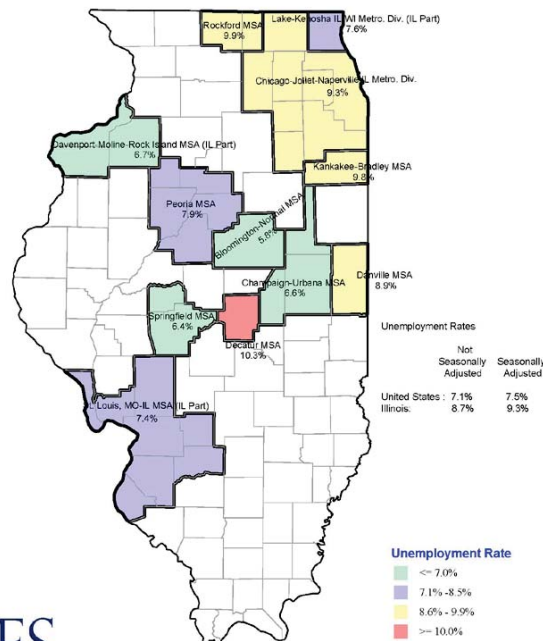
Need: Based on the inability of the current transportation system to accommodate projected traffic volumes and provide access for future growth on the east side



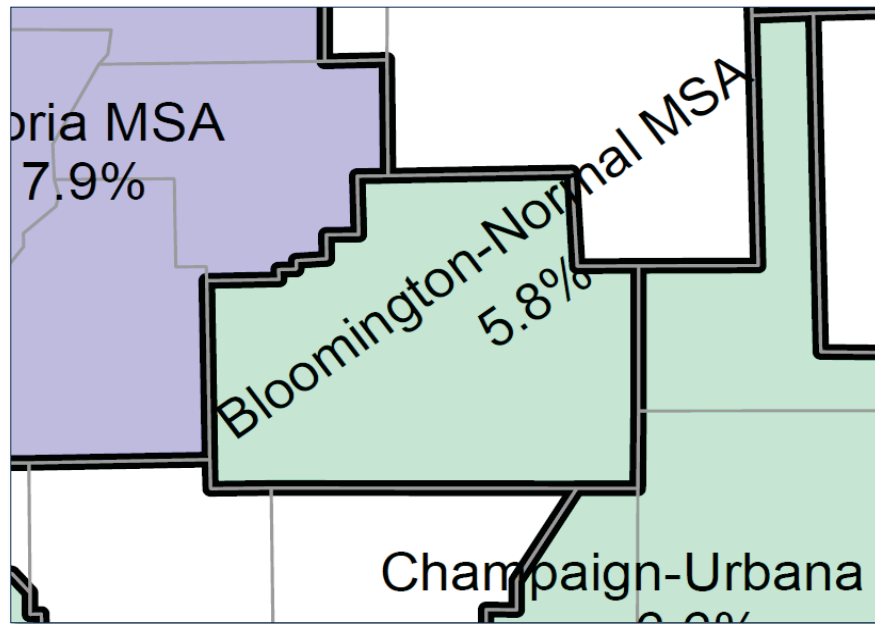
SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

**Illinois Unemployment Rate by Metropolitan Statistical Areas
April, 2013 - Not Seasonally Adjusted**

IL Dept. of Employment Security, Economic Information & Analysis Division



SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE



FASTEST GROWING ILLINOIS CITIES 2012

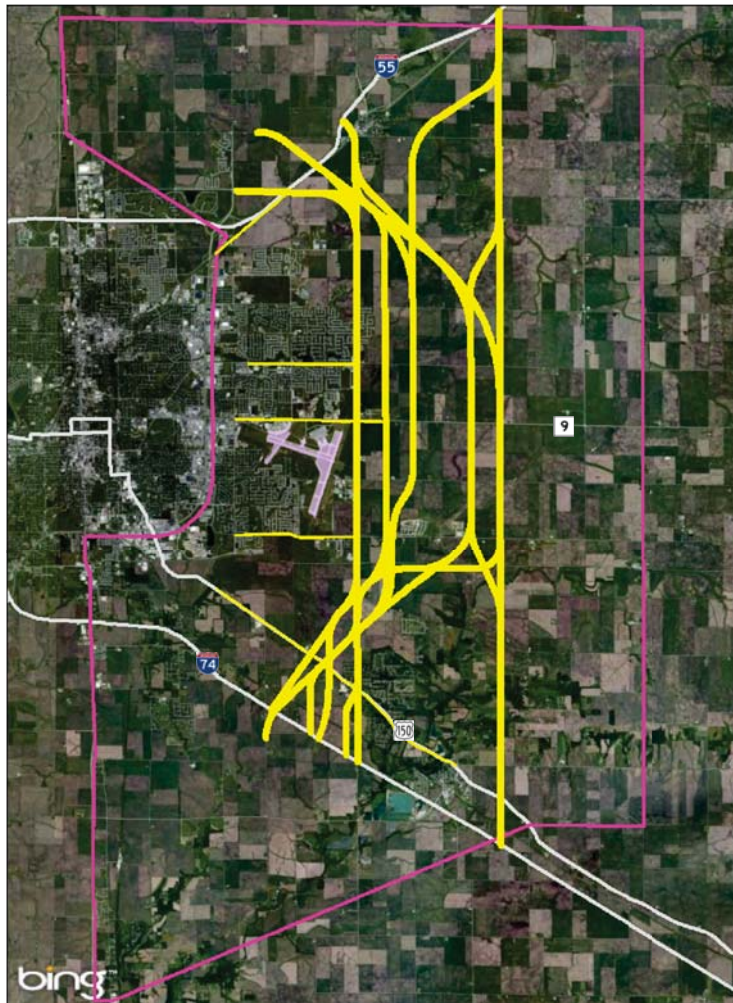
1. Normal
2. Champaign
3. Elgin
4. Bloomington
5. Naperville



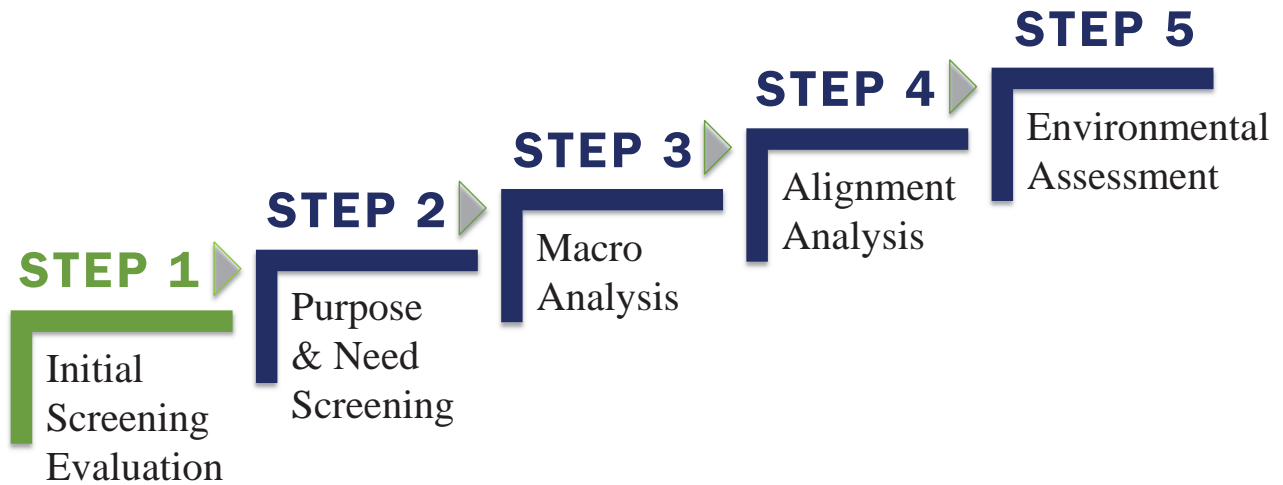
TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



129

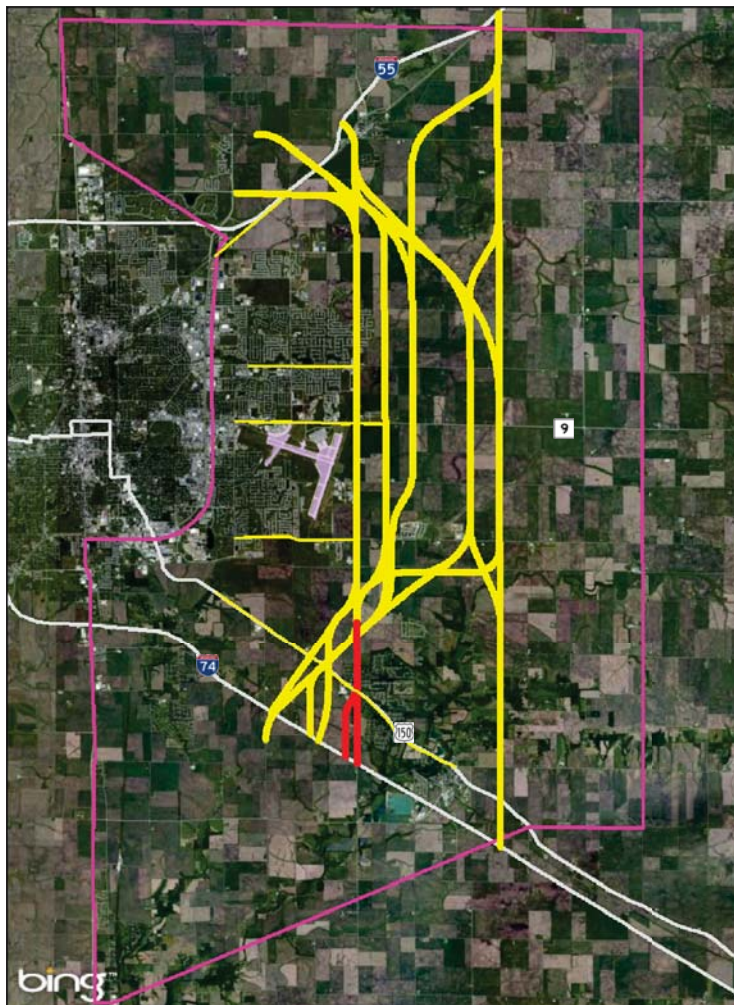
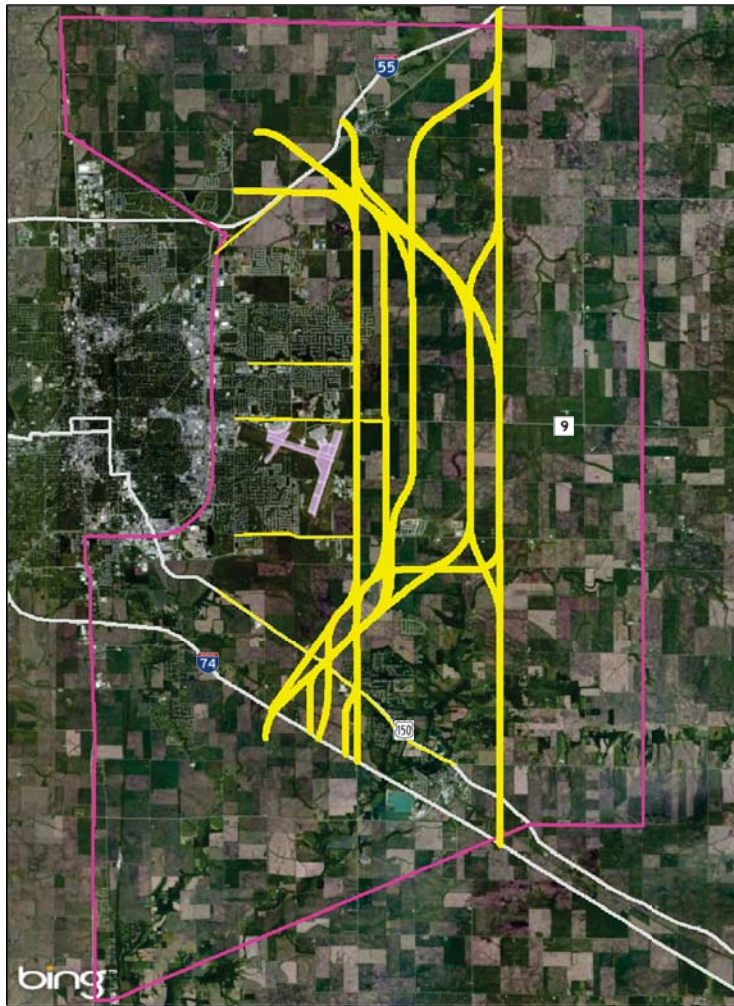


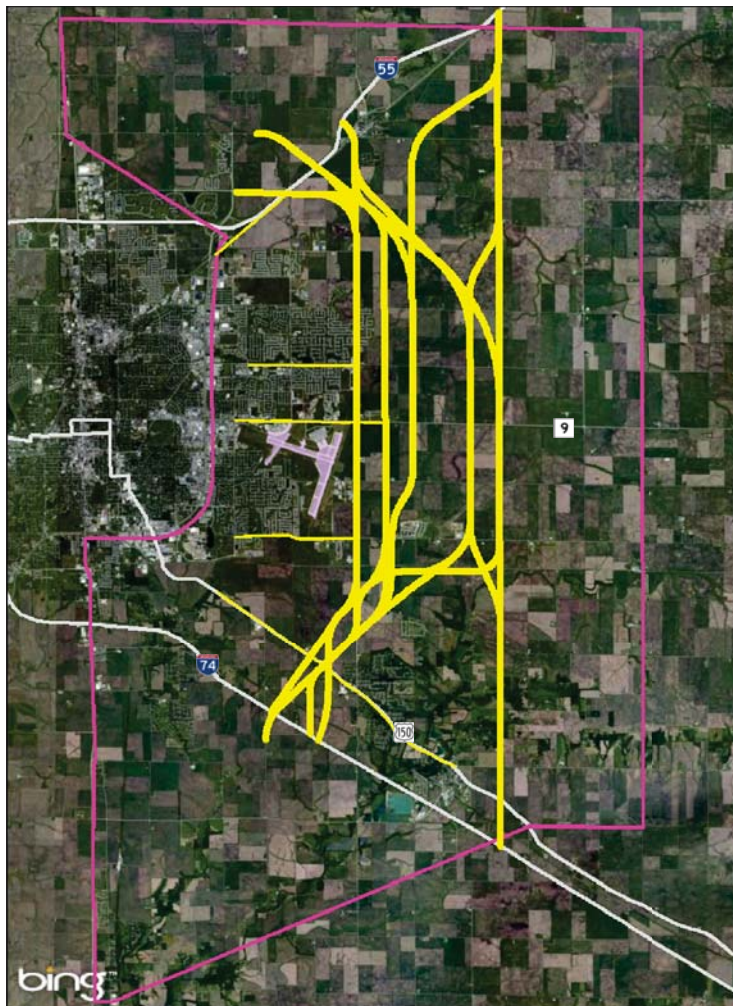
INITIAL SCREENING CRITERIA

Does the alternative:

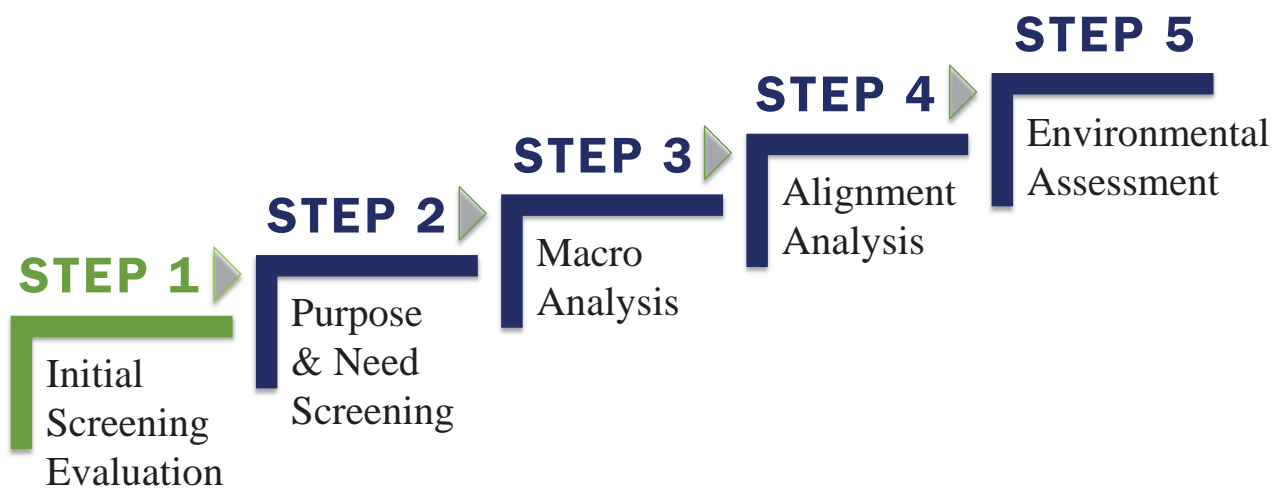
- Directly impact State/Federally protected areas?
- Meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the airport?
- Divide or isolate a neighborhood or community?
(follows IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual)



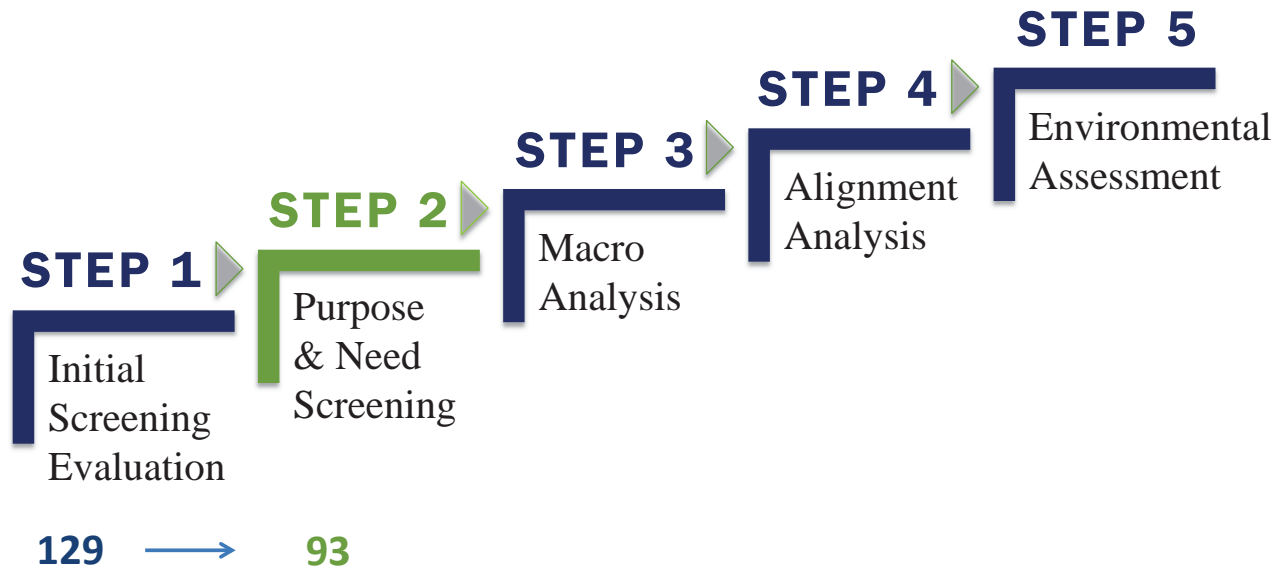




ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



PURPOSE & NEED SCREENING

**Accommodate
Managed Growth**

Is/does the alternative:

- compatible with adopted land use plans?
- restrict/reduce opportunities for uncontrolled, sporadic, or leapfrog development?

Mobility

Does the alternative:

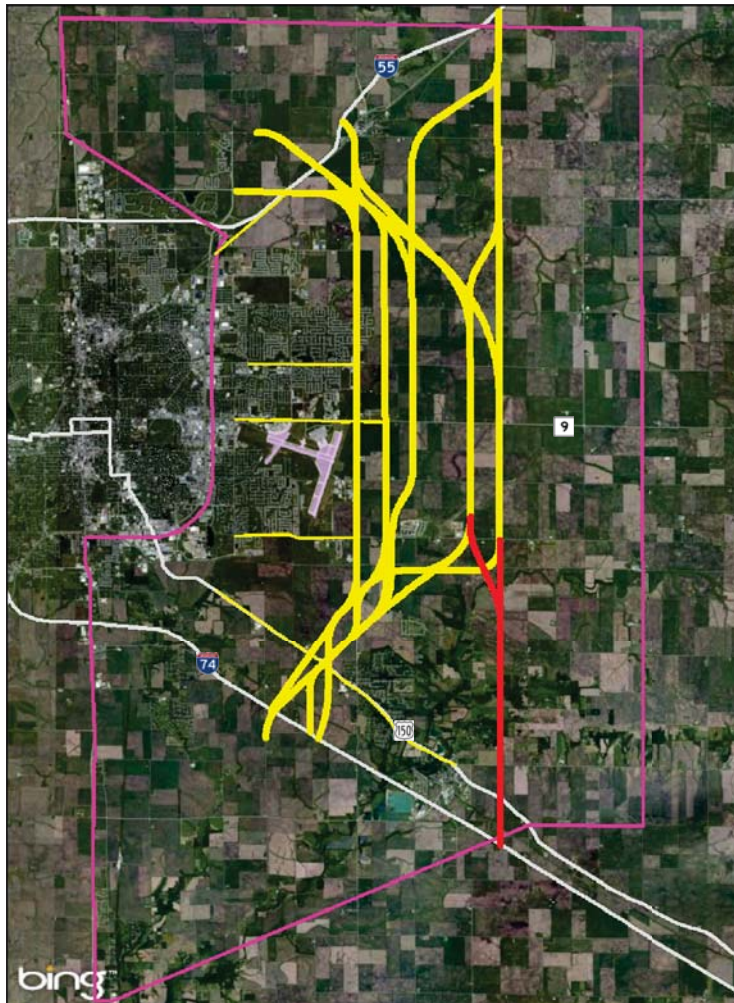
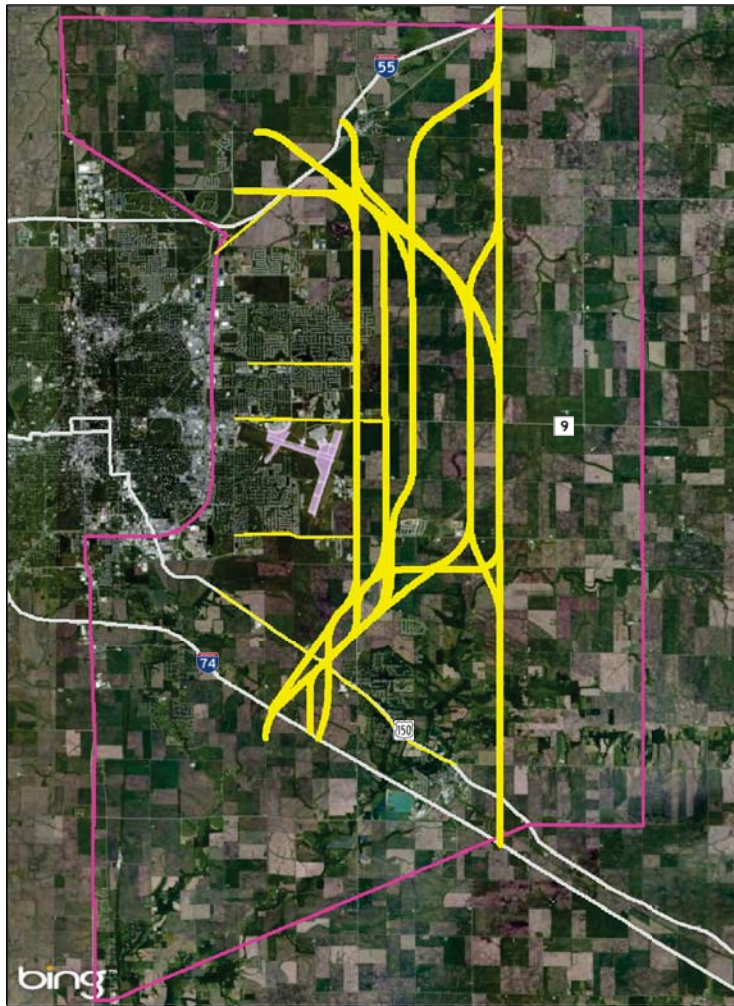
- reduce congestion in the study area?
- improve N-S travel efficiencies?
- improve E-W travel efficiencies?

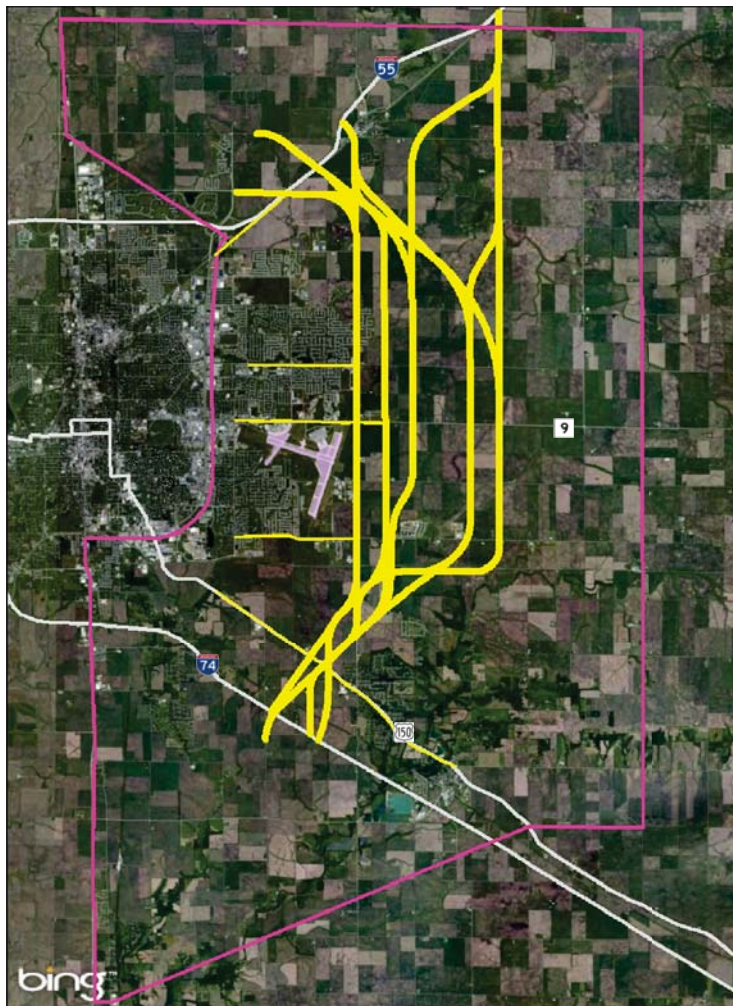
Access

Does the alternative:

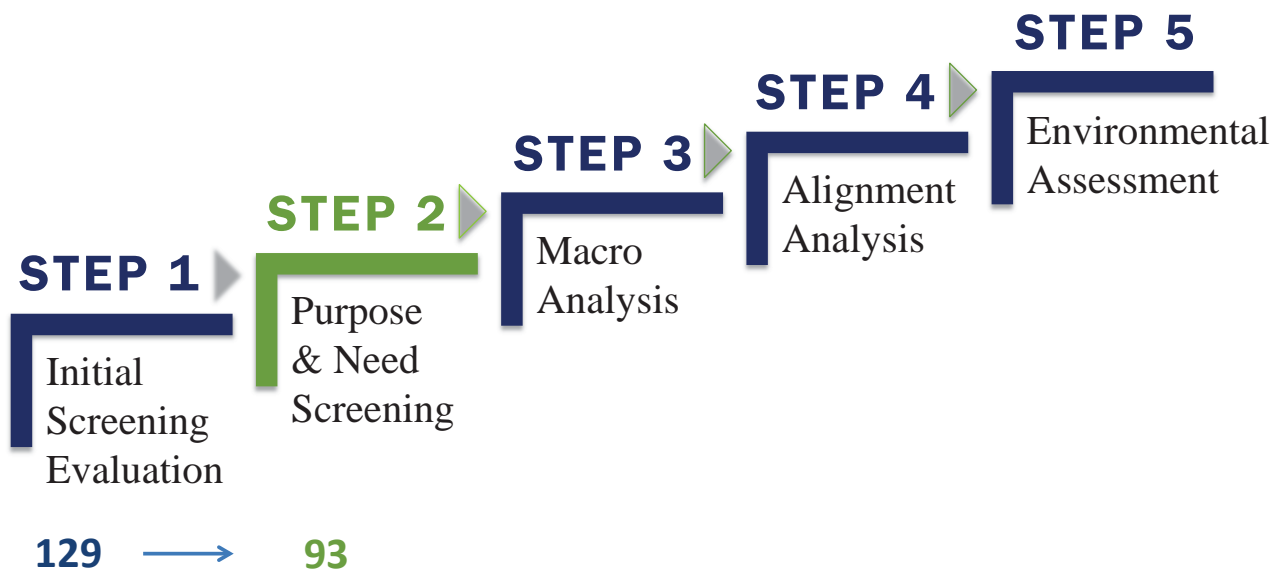
- improve travel efficiency to the interstate system?
- provide N-S connectivity?
- provide E-W connectivity?



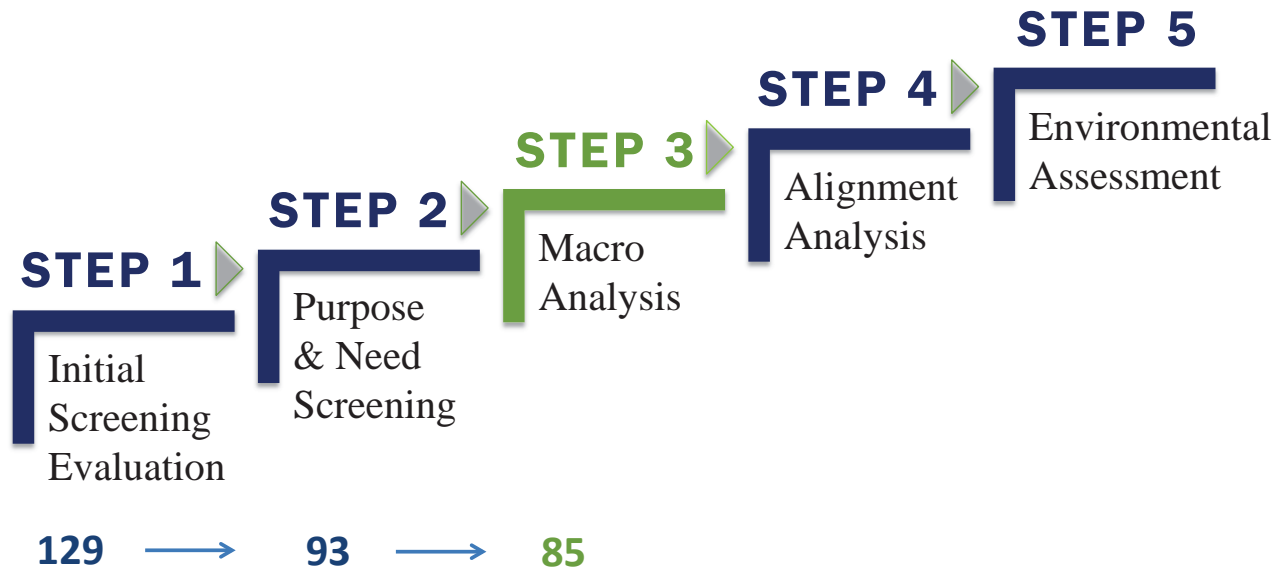




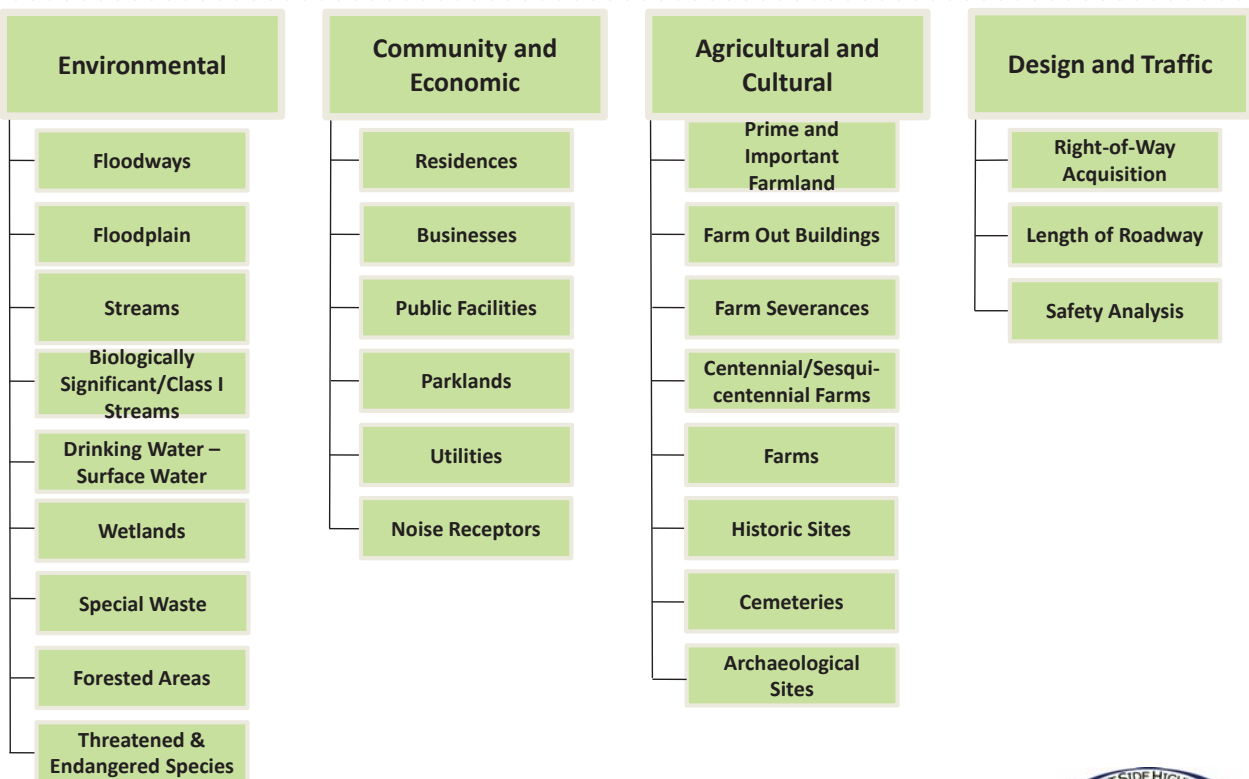
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS

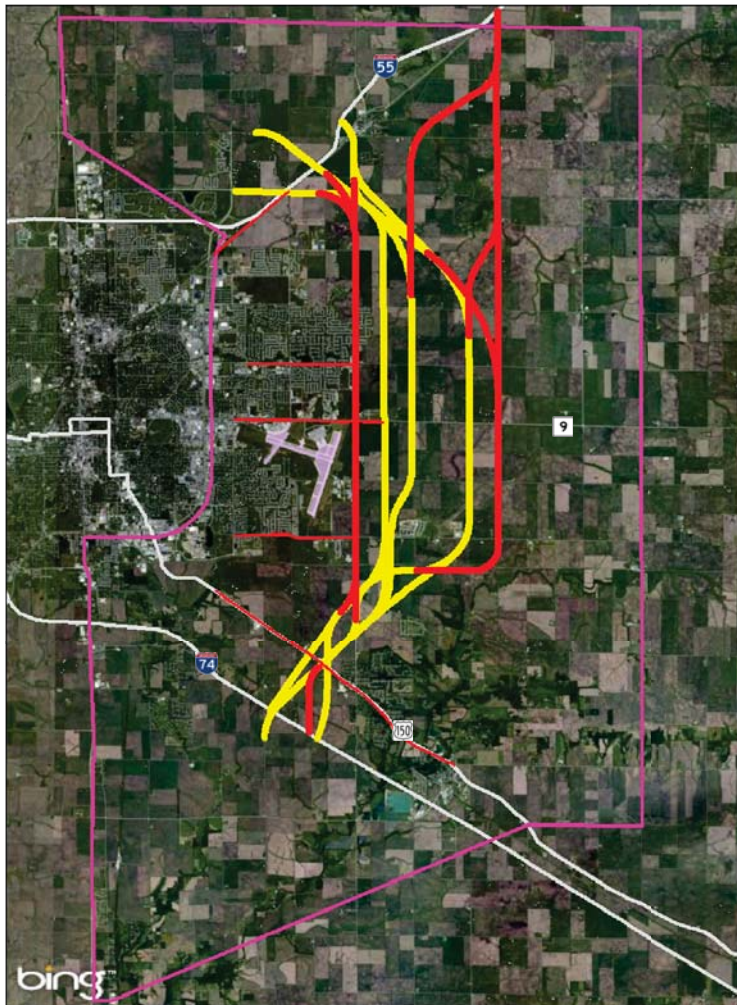
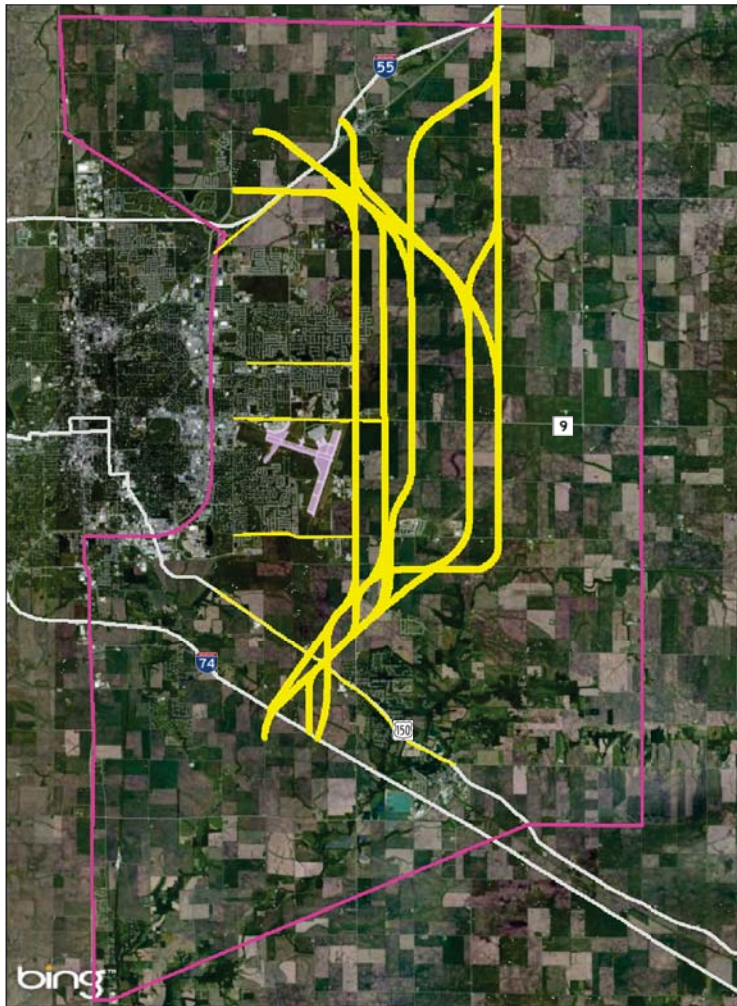


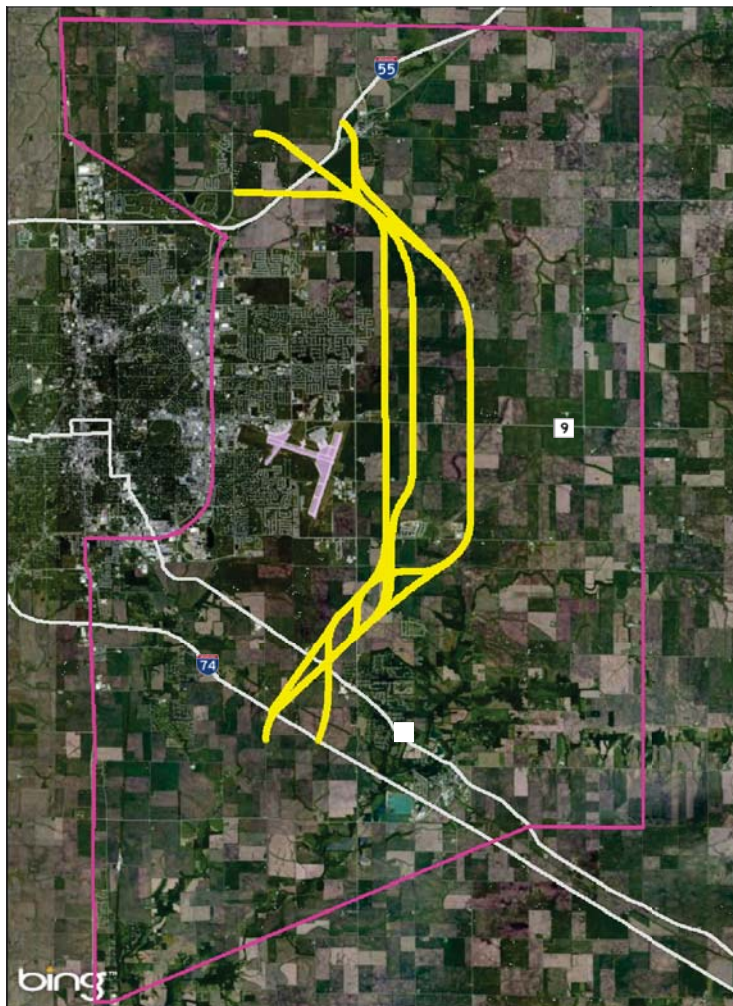
ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



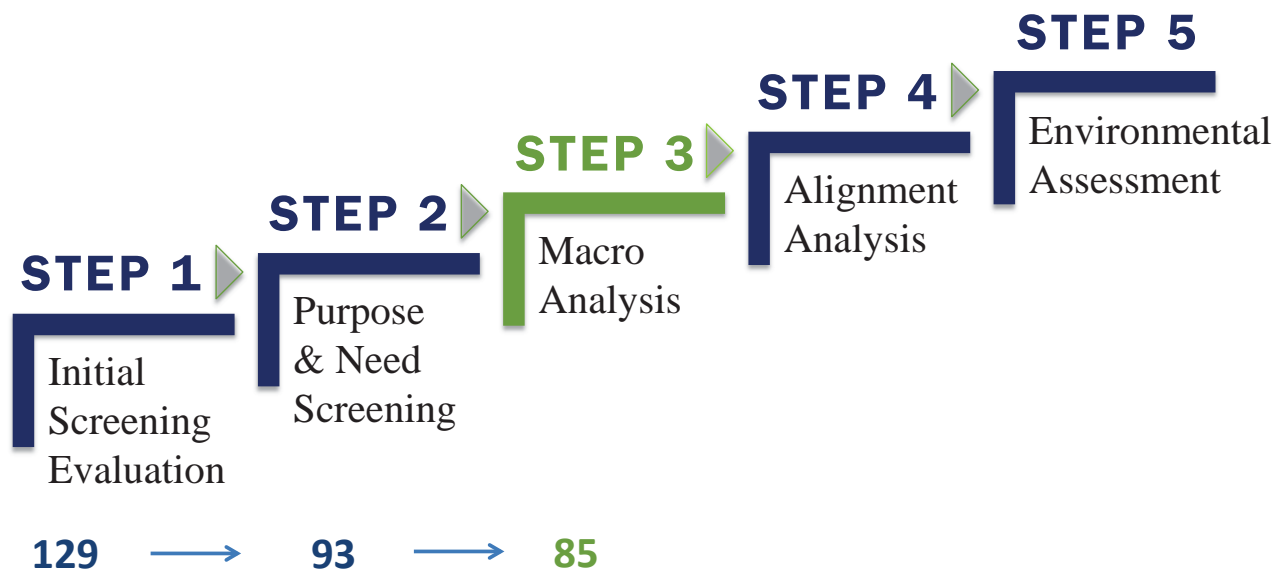
MACRO ANALYSIS CRITERIA



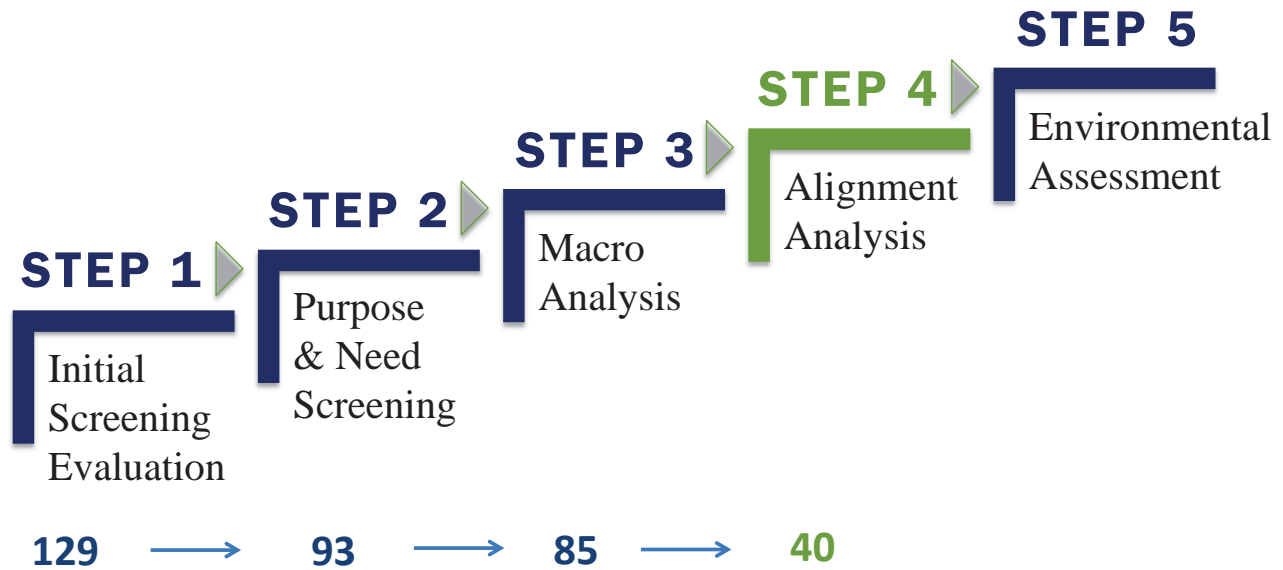




ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS

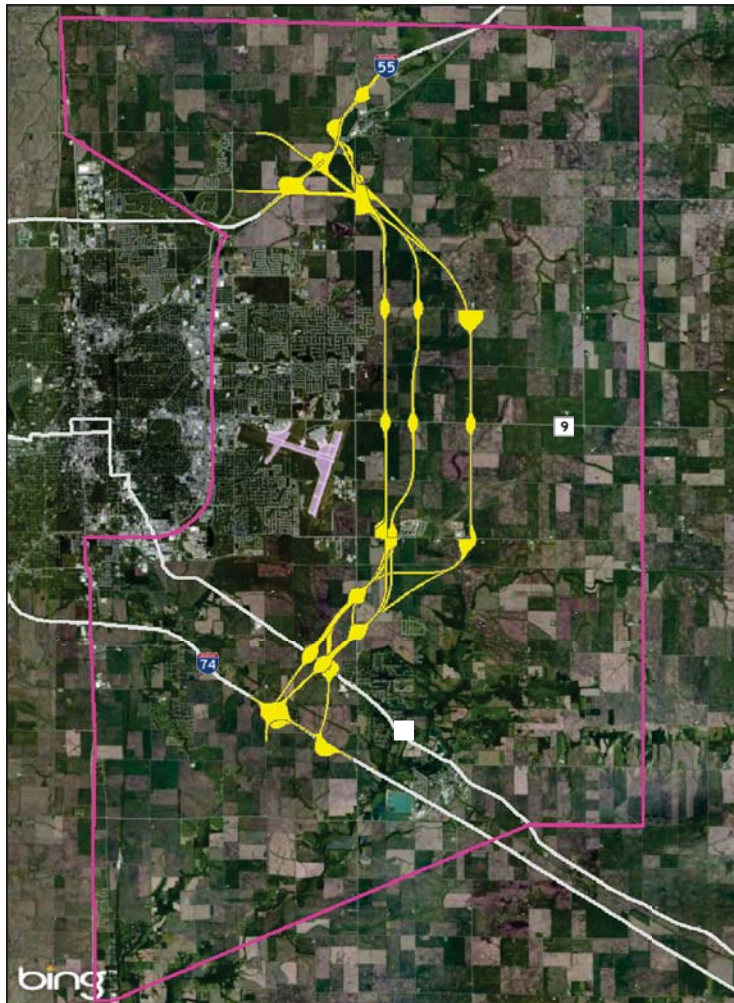
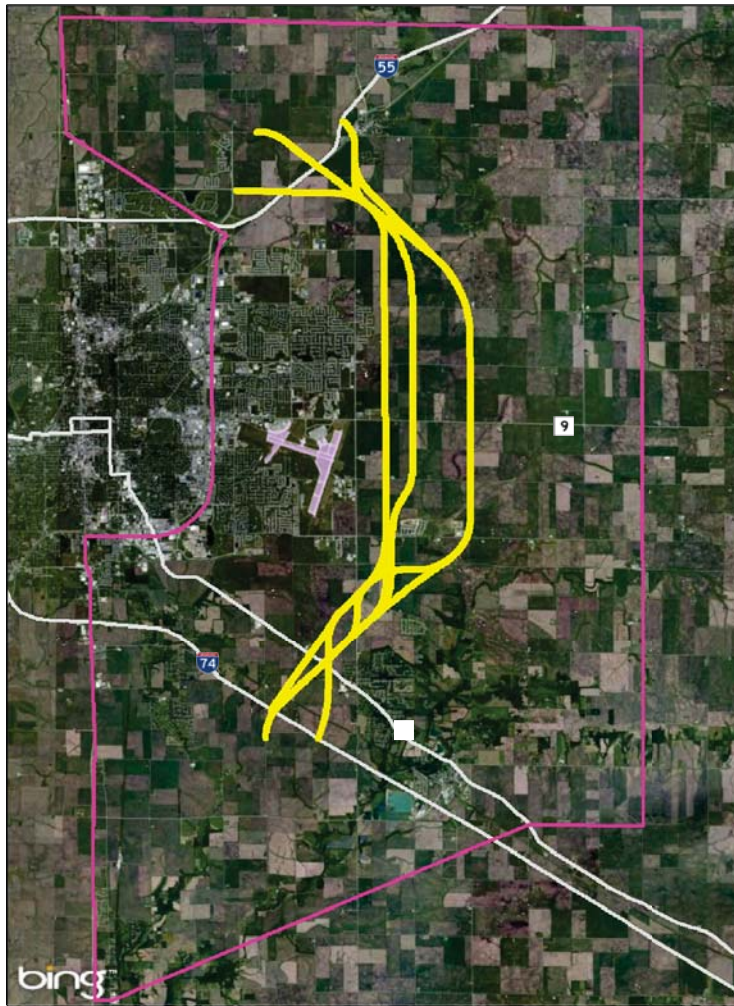


TIMELINE

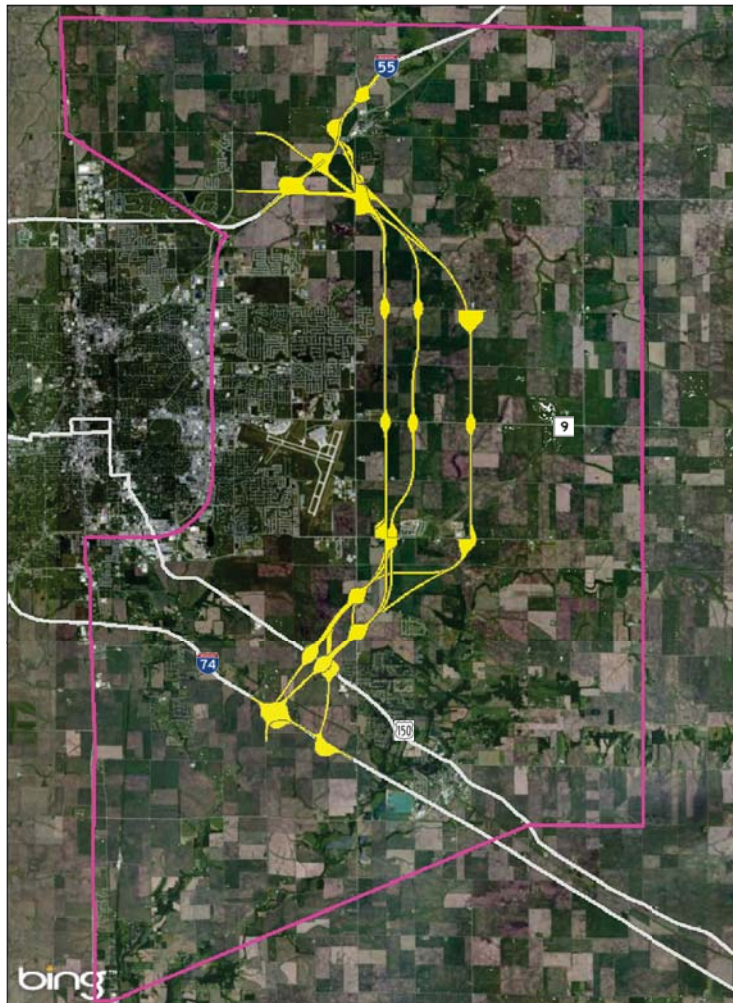


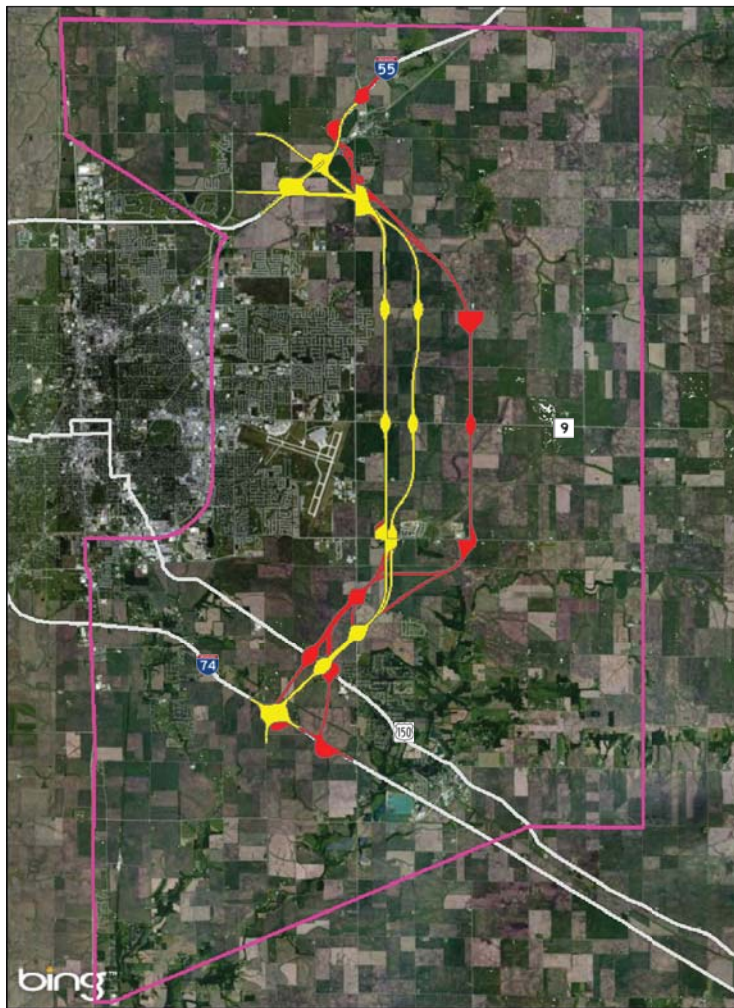
- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



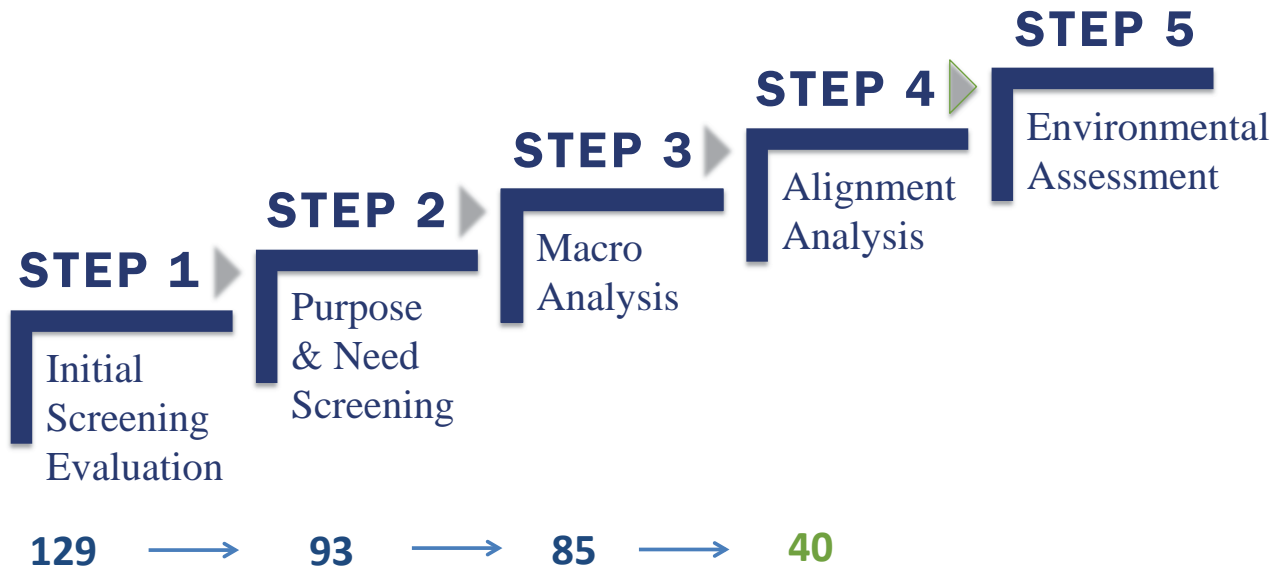


ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA

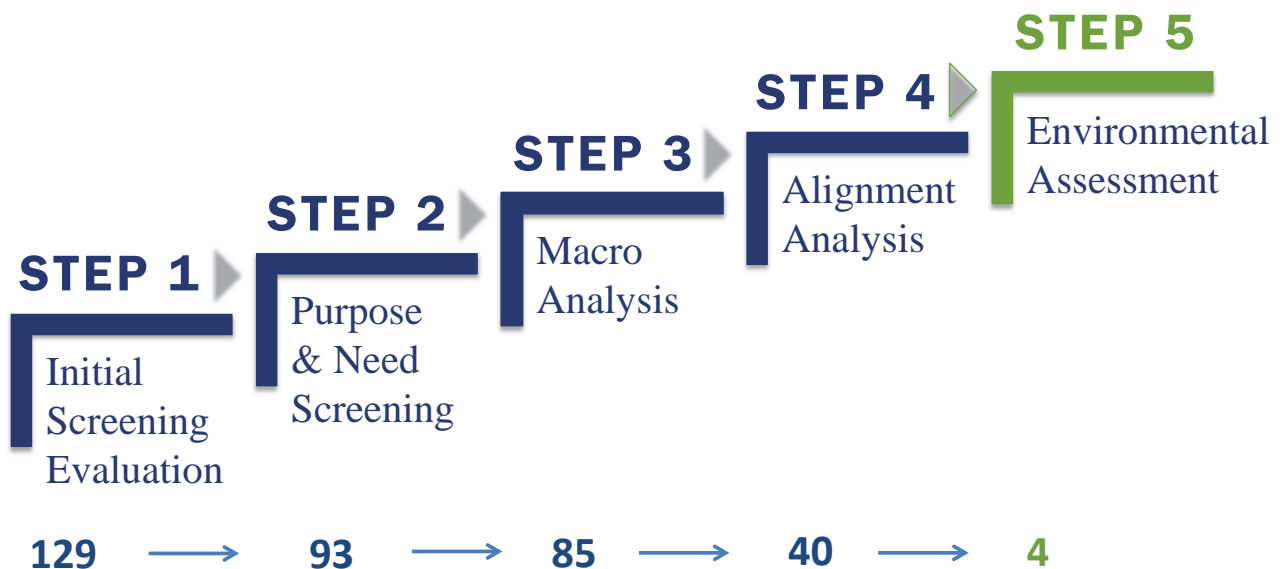




ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS



TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing

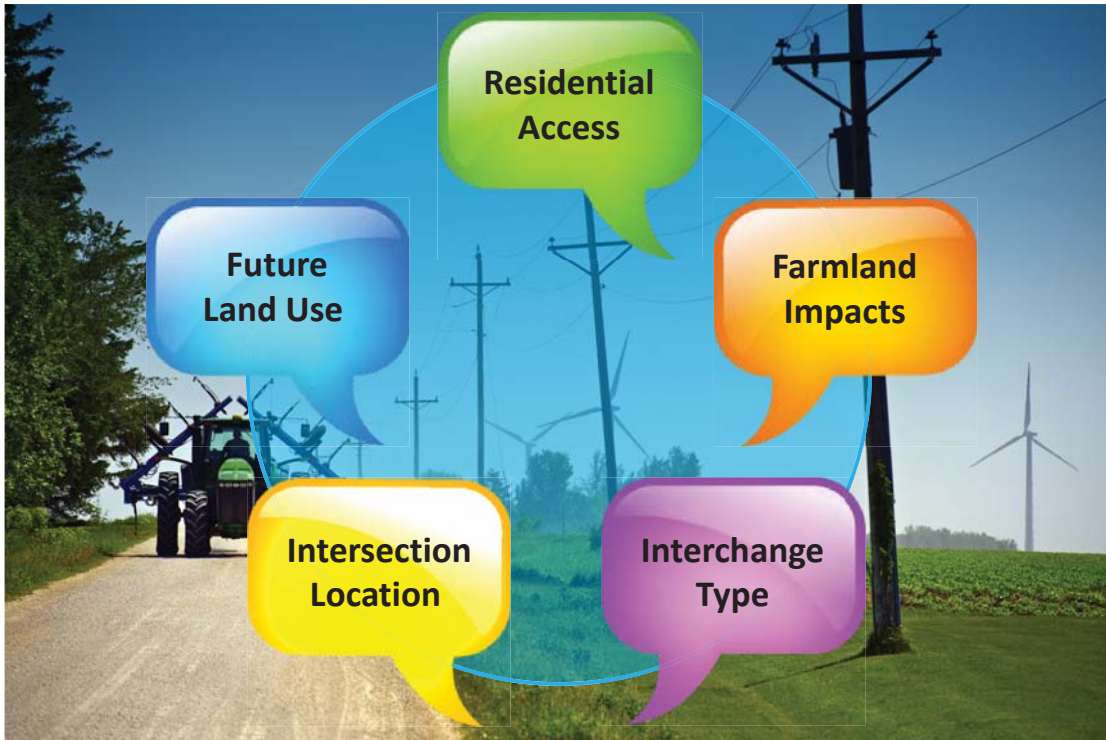


FOCUS WORKING GROUPS (FWG)

- Advisory group with specific interests and knowledge
- Review specific planning and design materials
- Member selection occurred in a fair and transparent manner



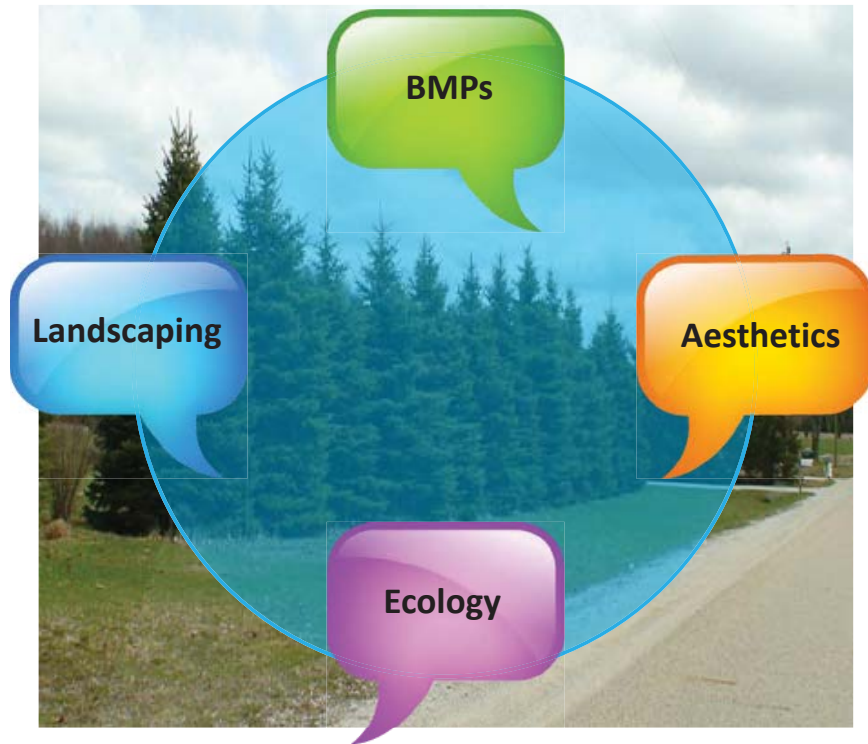
LAND USE AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT FWG



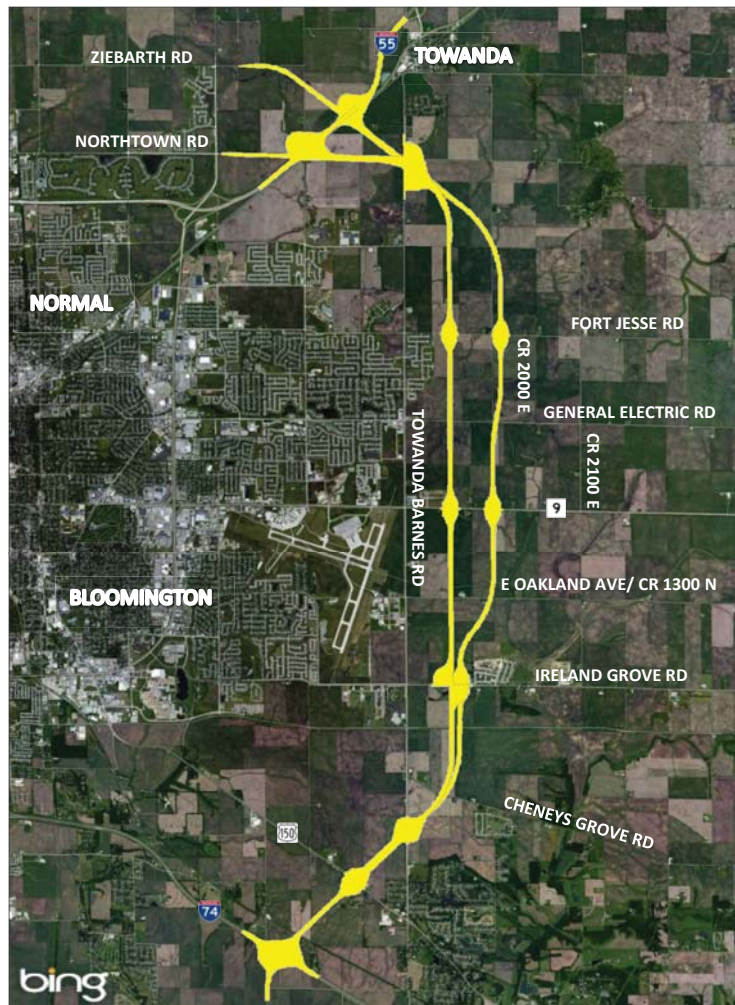
ALTERNATIVE MODES FWG



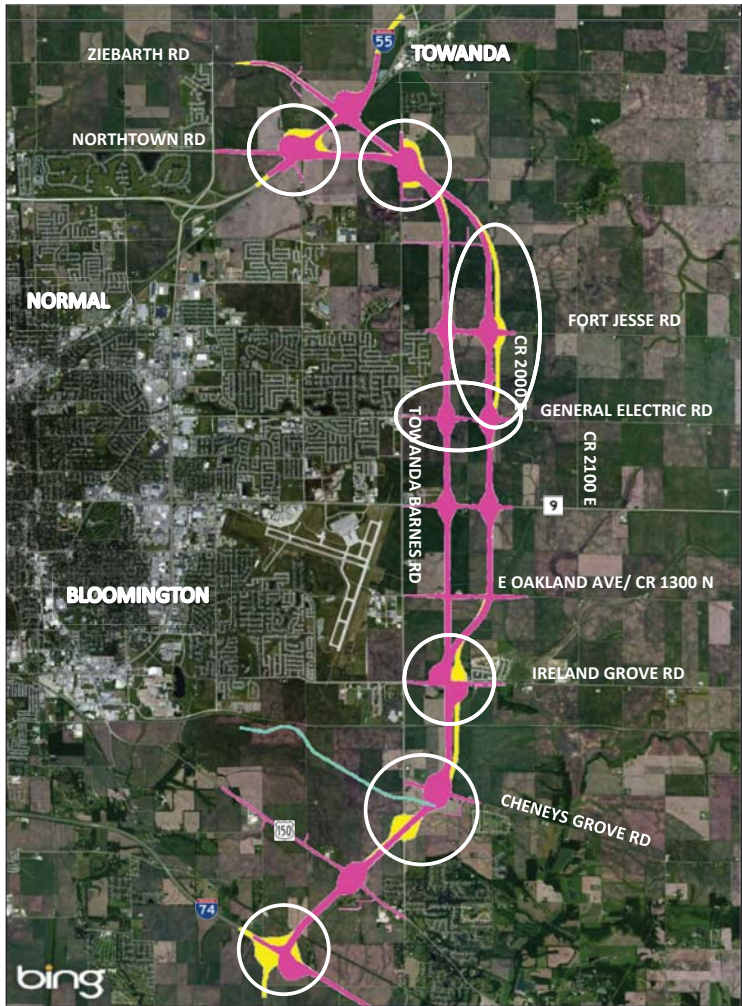
SUSTAINABILITY FWG



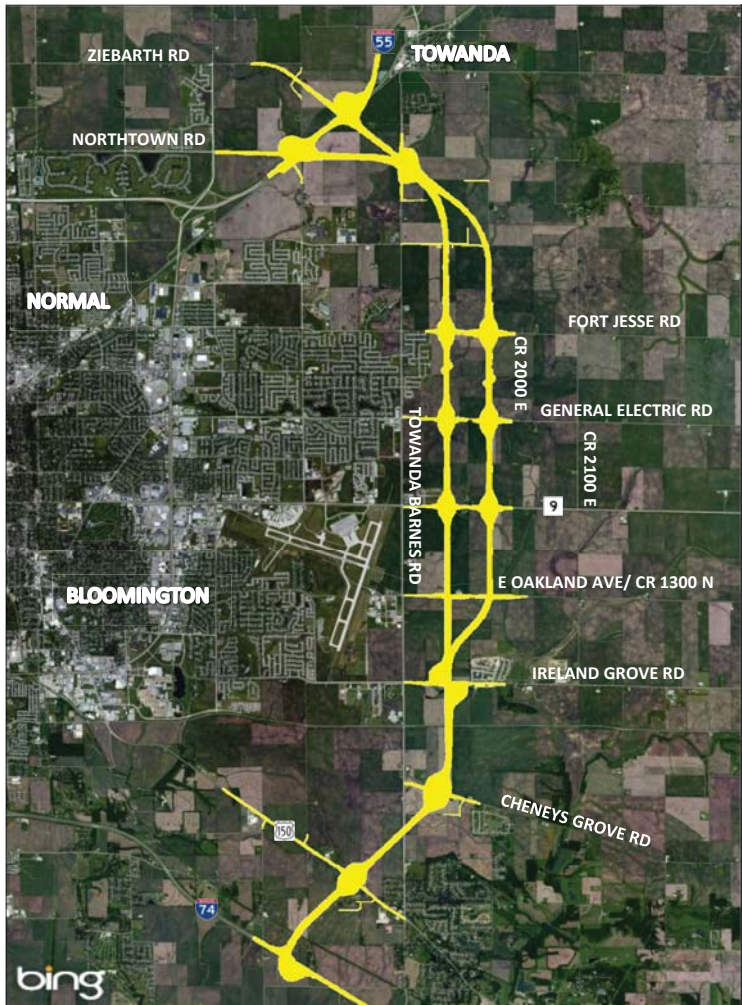
Remaining Alternatives



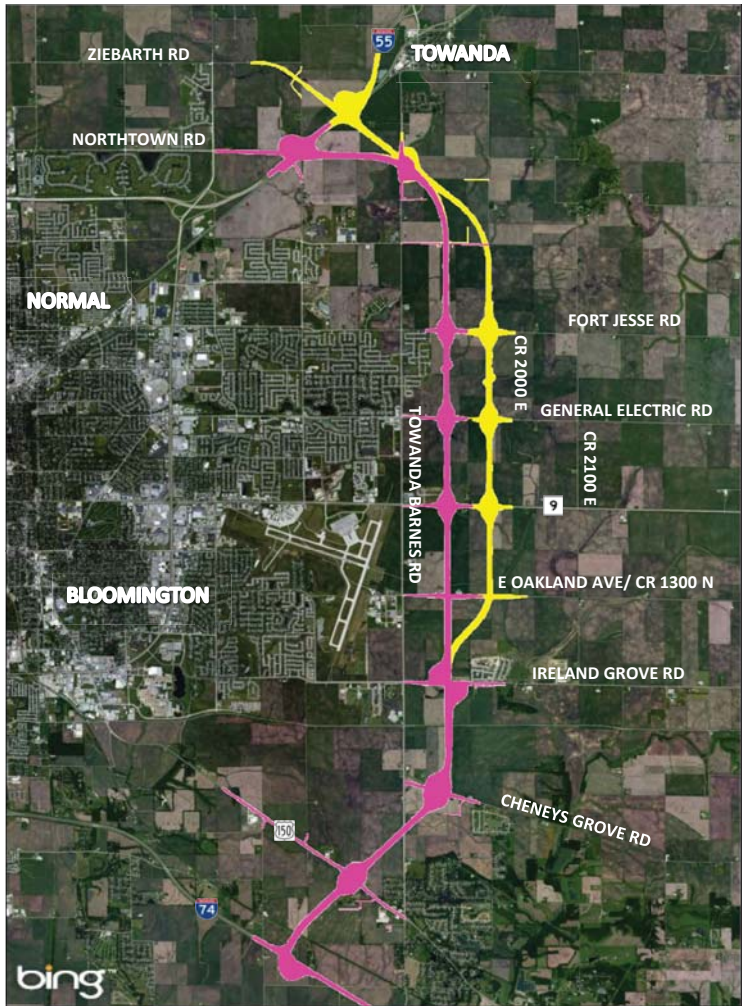
Remaining Alternatives



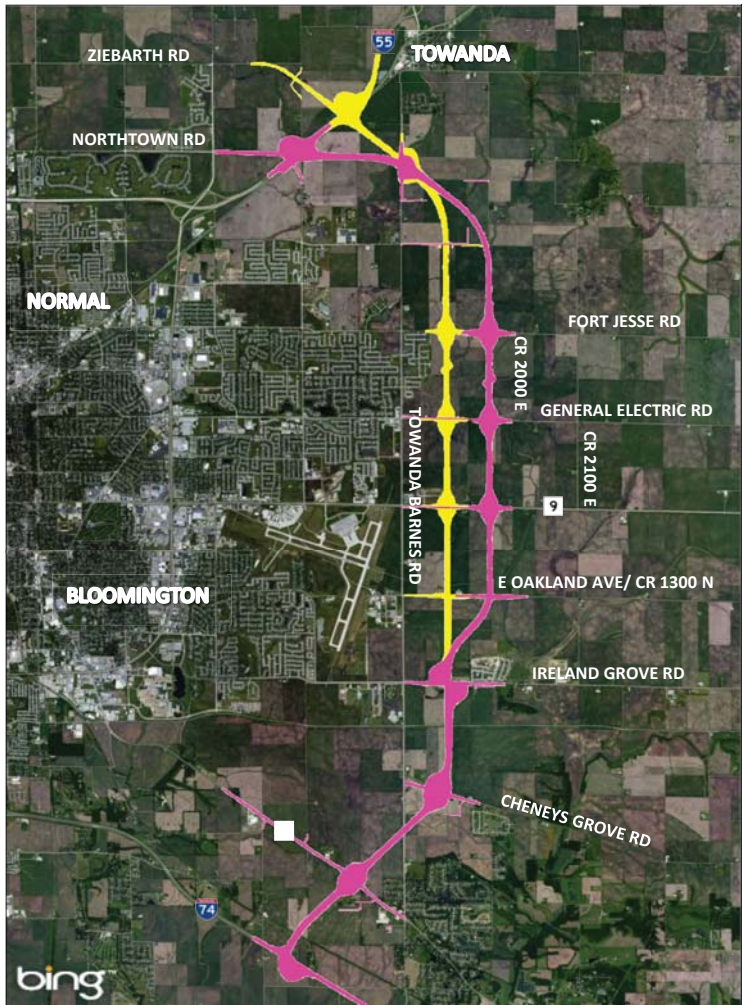
Remaining Alternatives



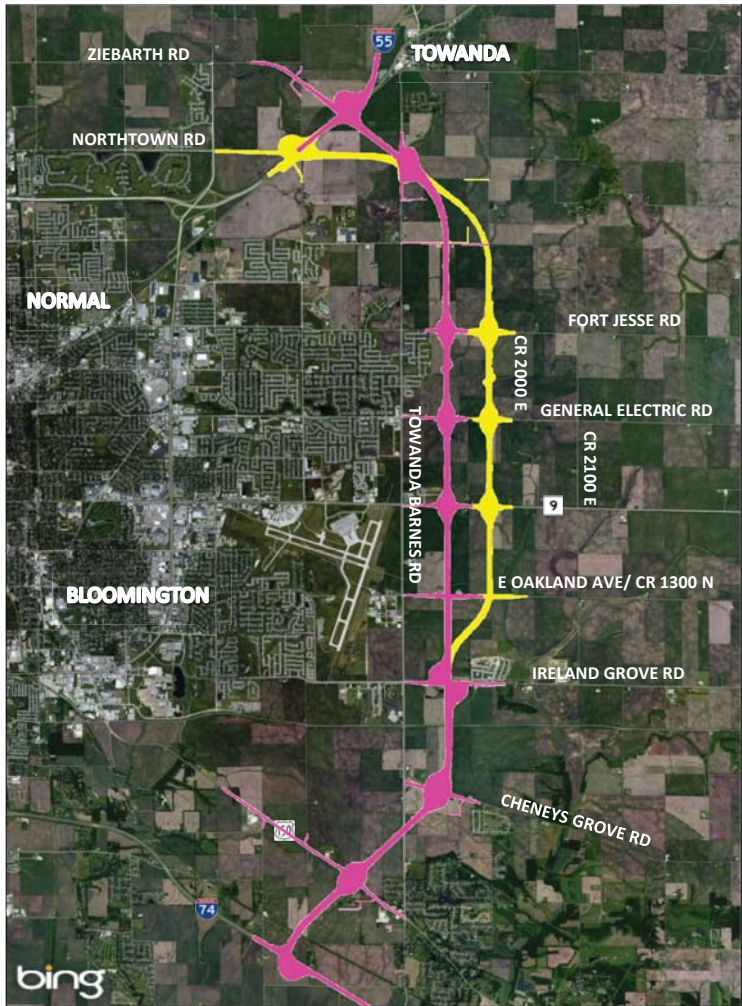
124



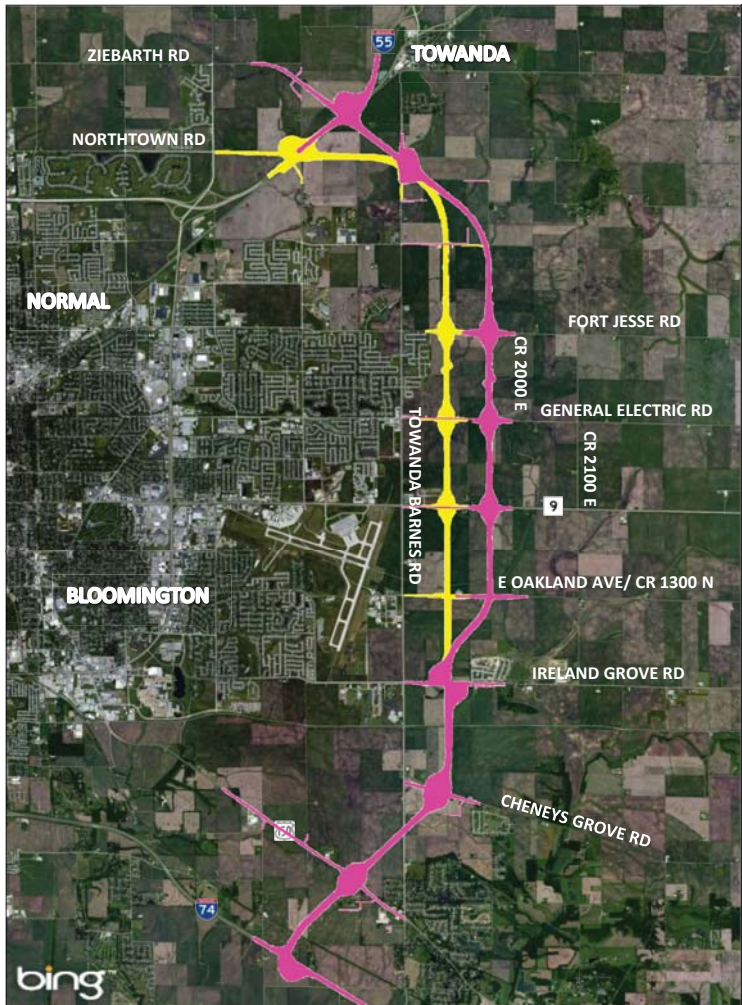
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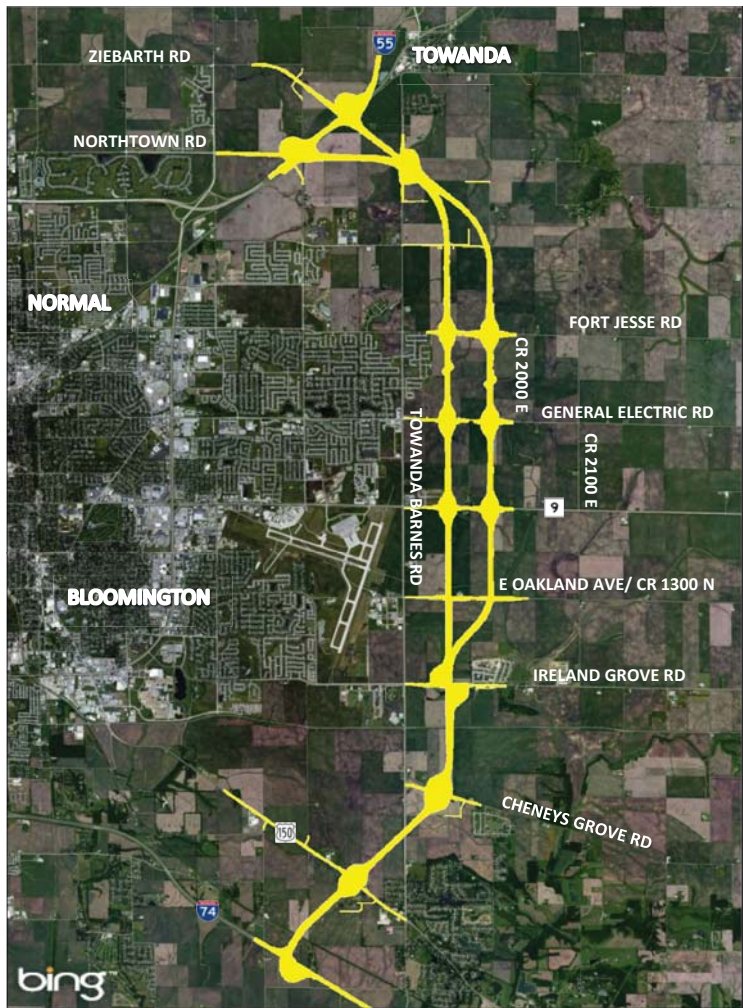
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127



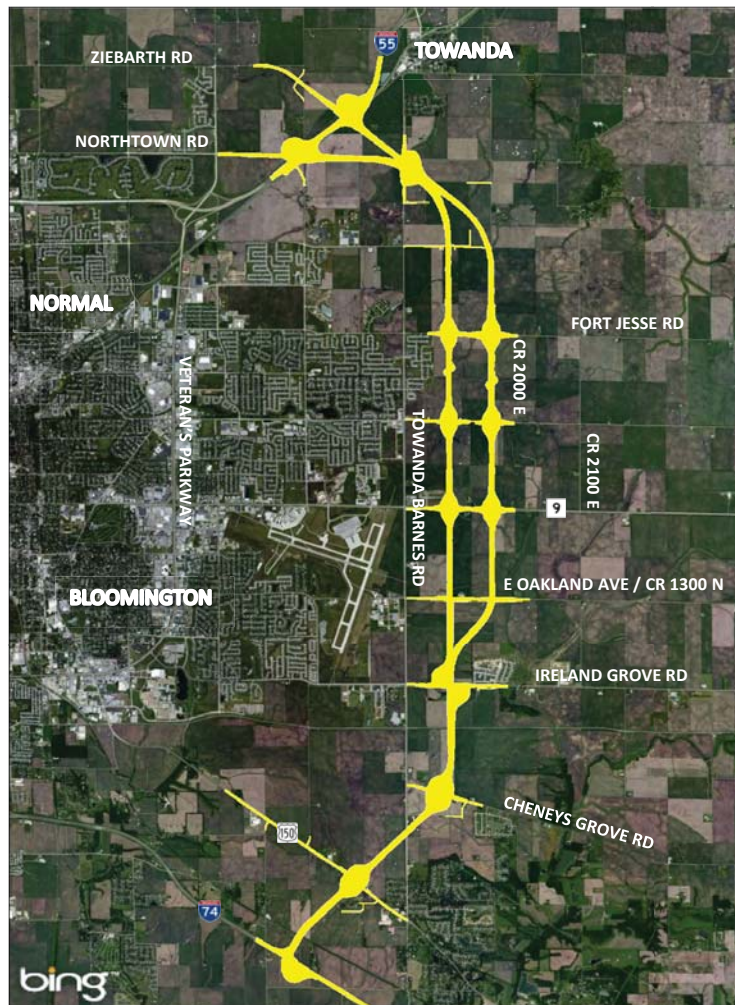
Remaining Alternatives



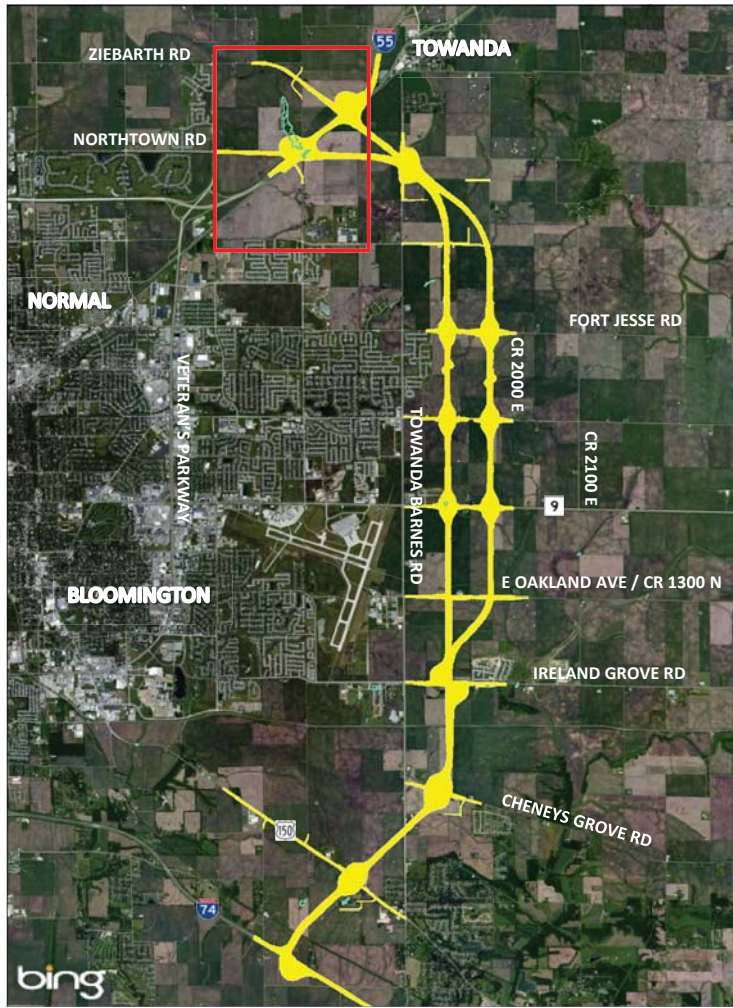
TYPICAL SECTION



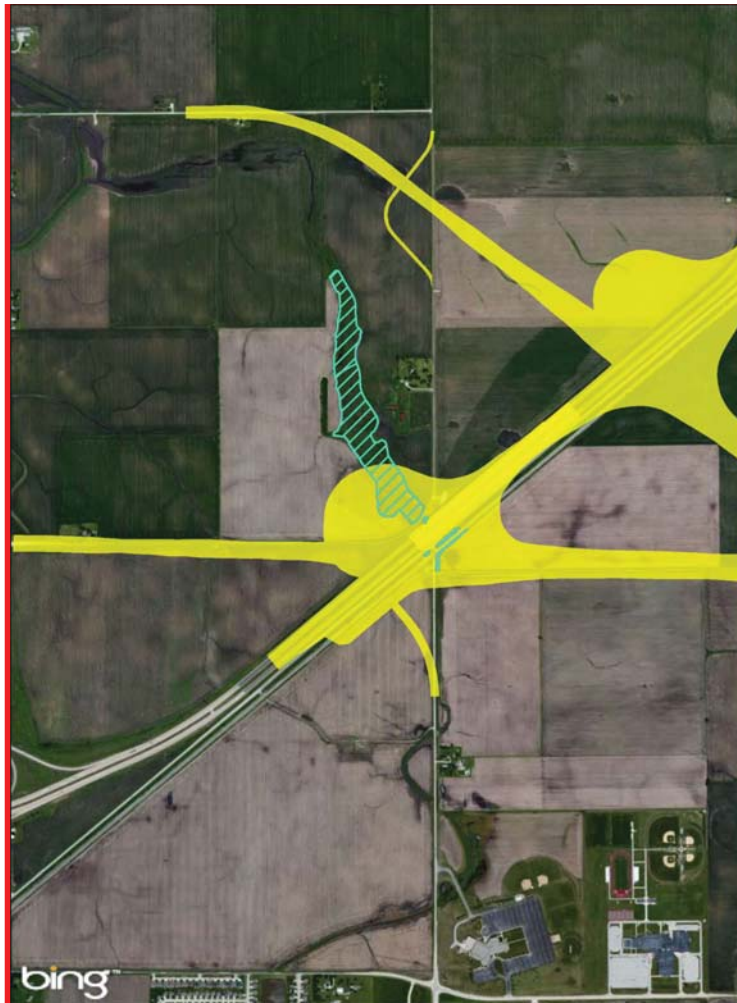
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA



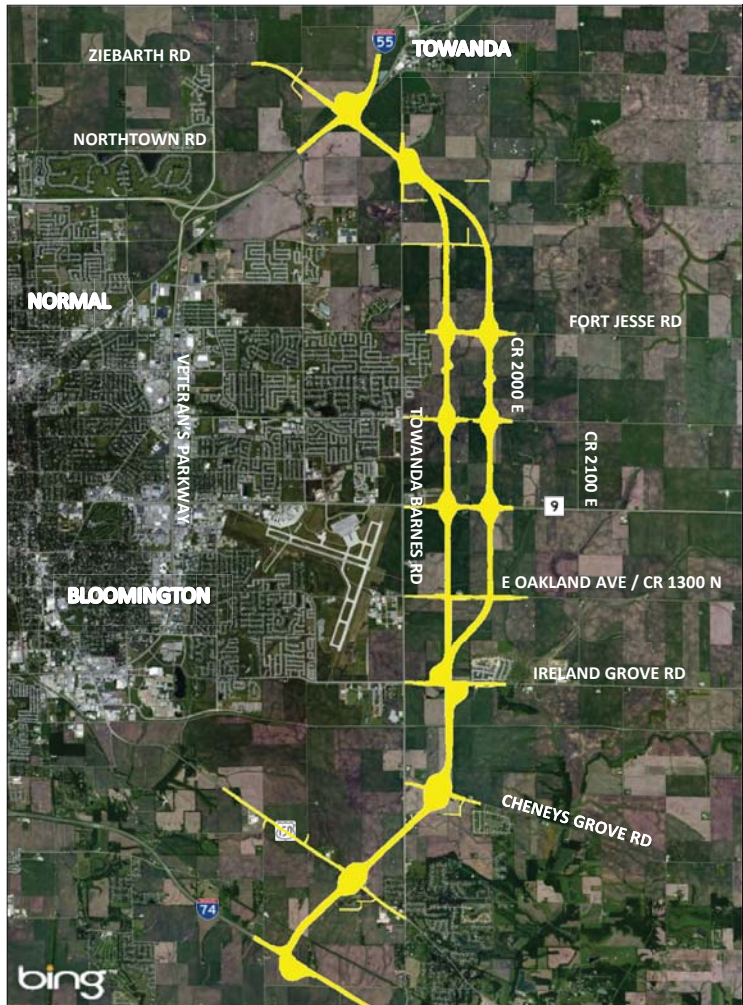
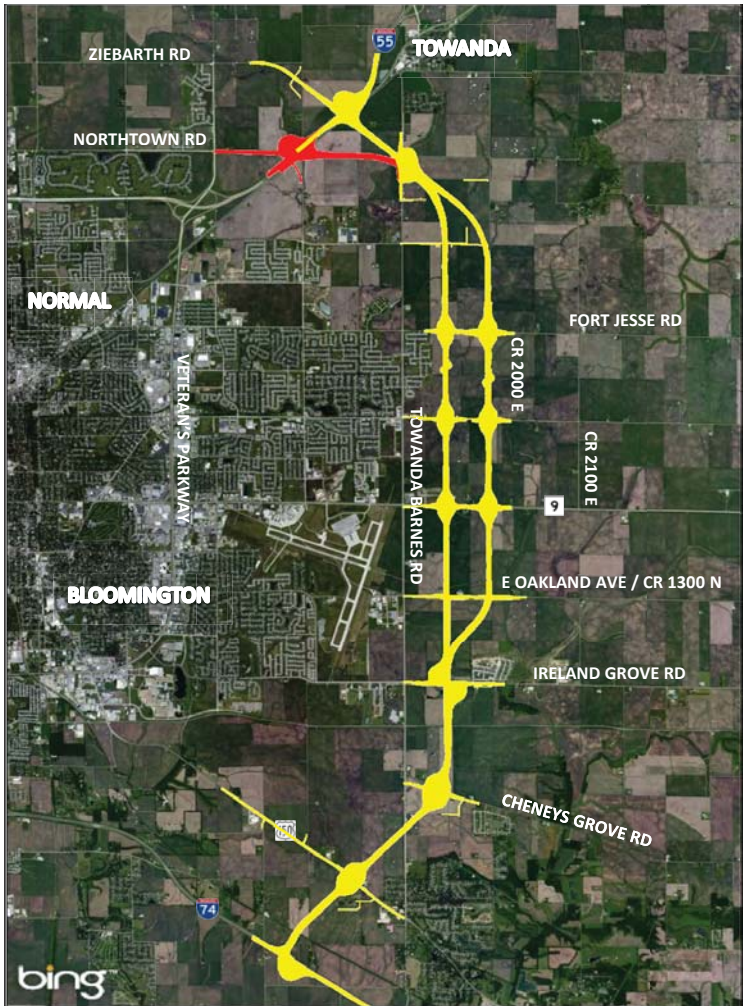
**Wetland
Impacts**



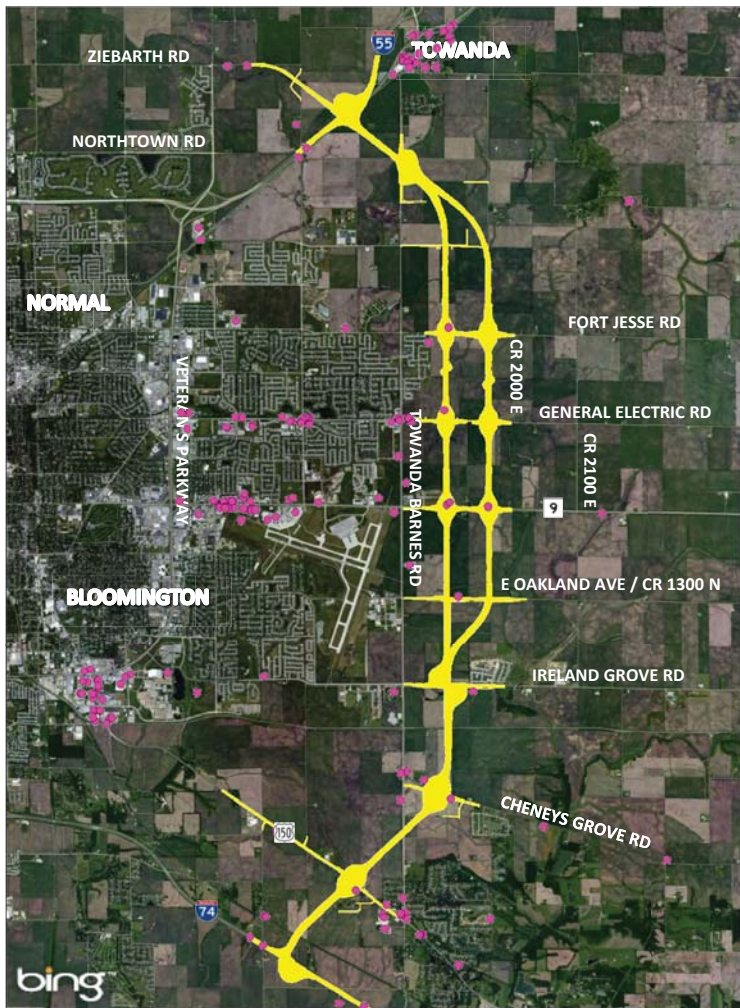
**Wetland
Impacts**



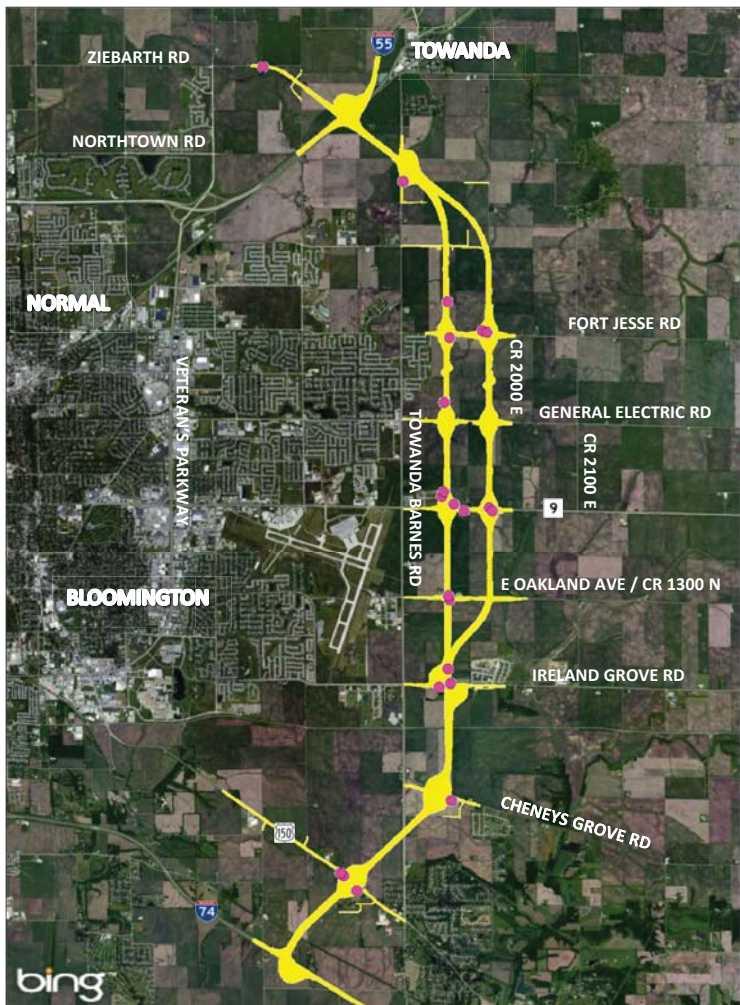
I-55 Operational Impacts



Special Waste Impacts



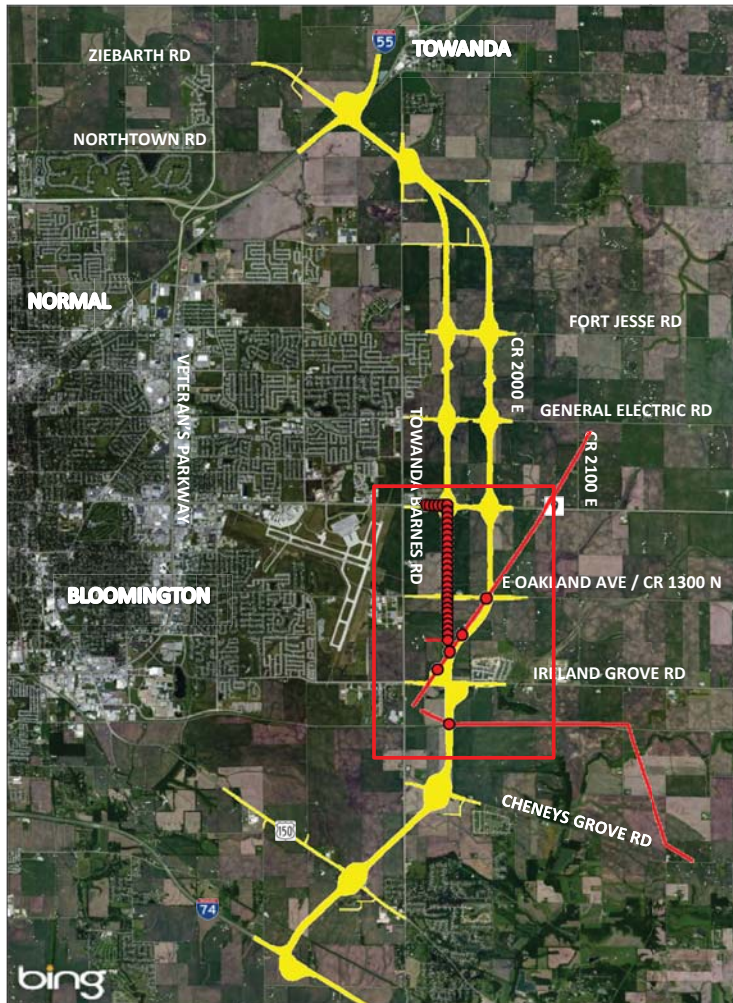
Residential Impacts



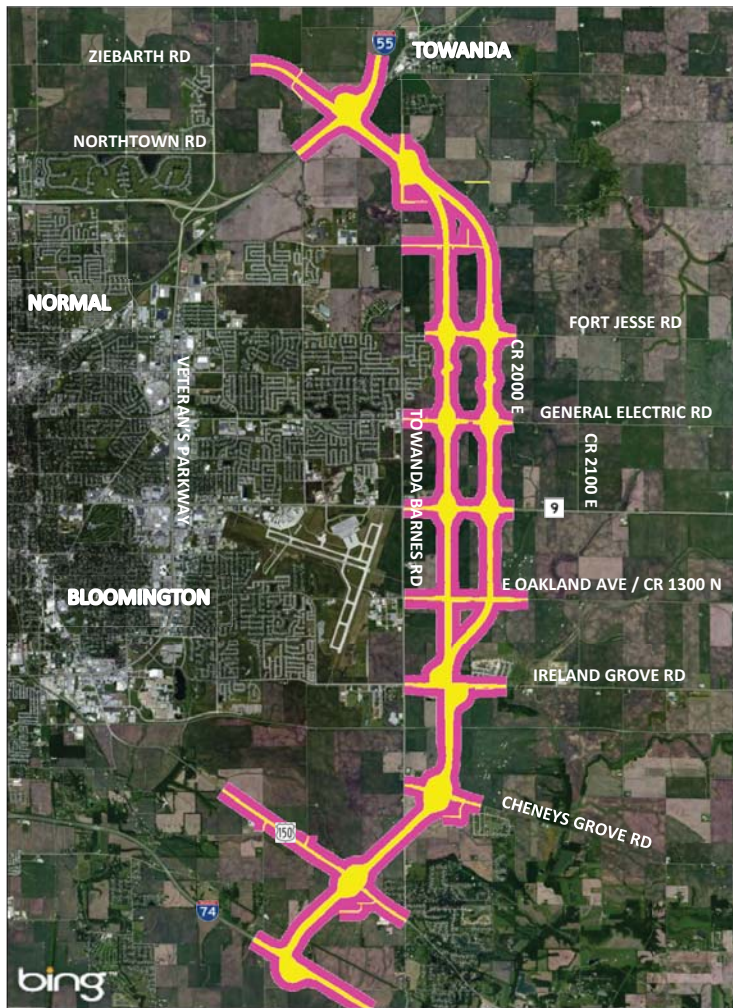
Business Impacts



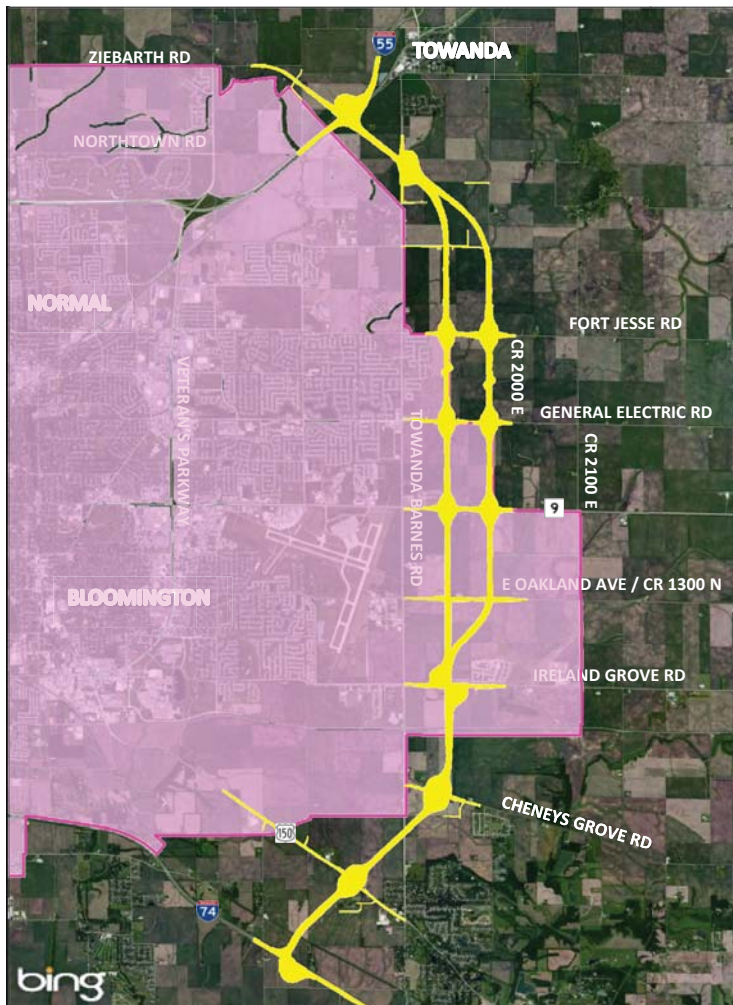
Utility Impacts



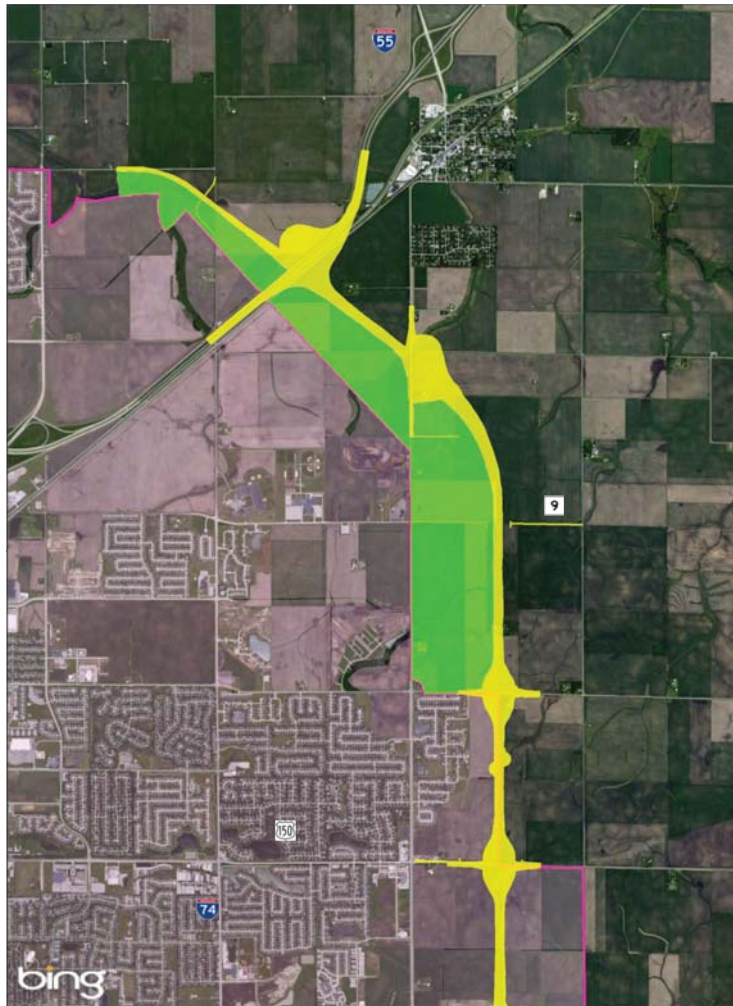
Noise Receptors



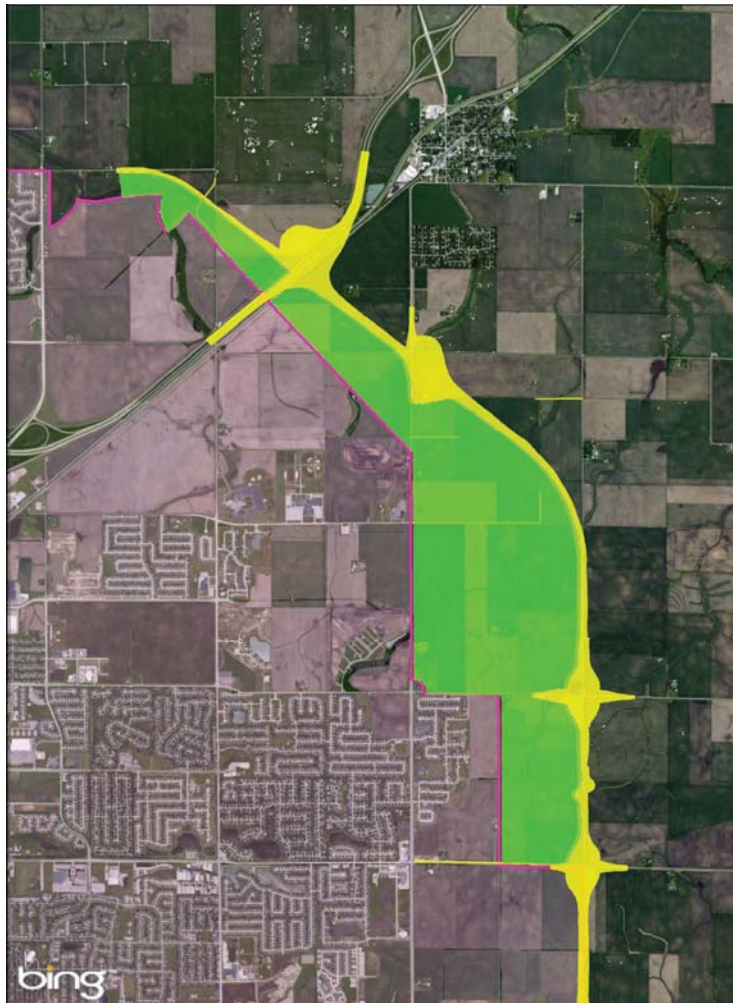
Farmland Preservation



**Farmland
Preservation**



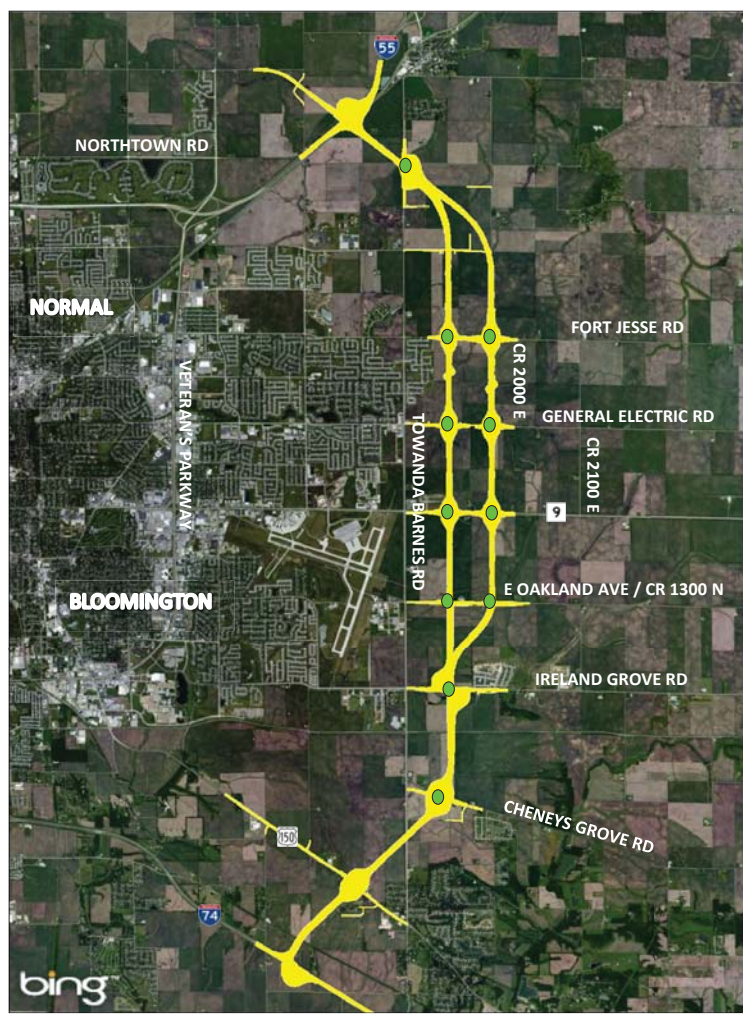
**Farmland
Preservation**



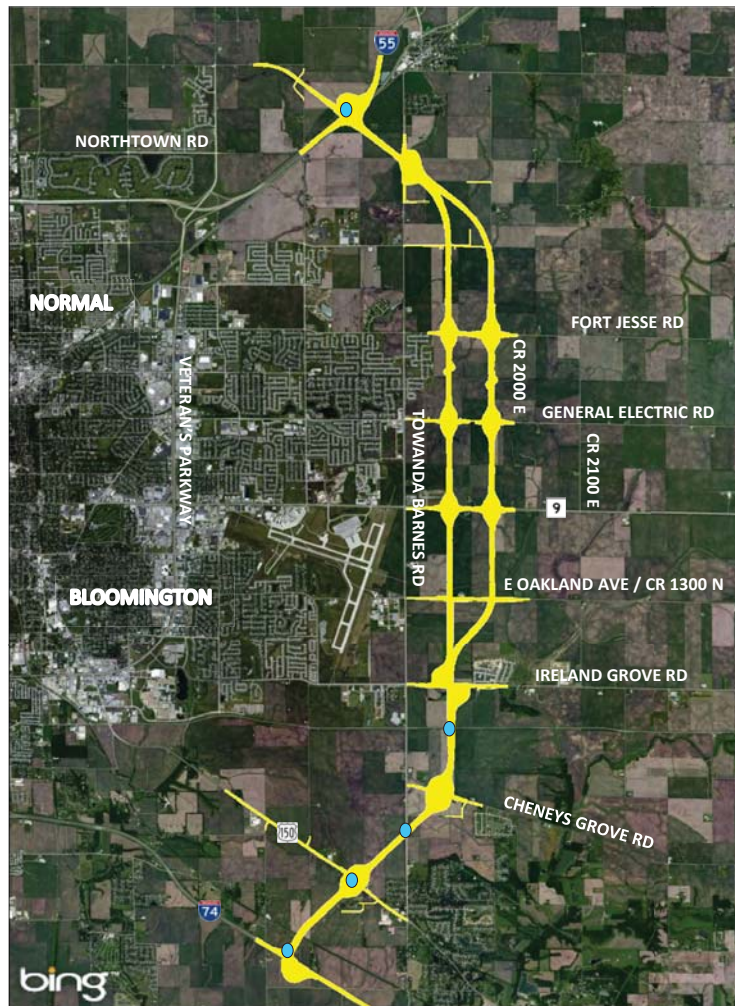
Highly Erodible Soils



Underpasses



Overpasses

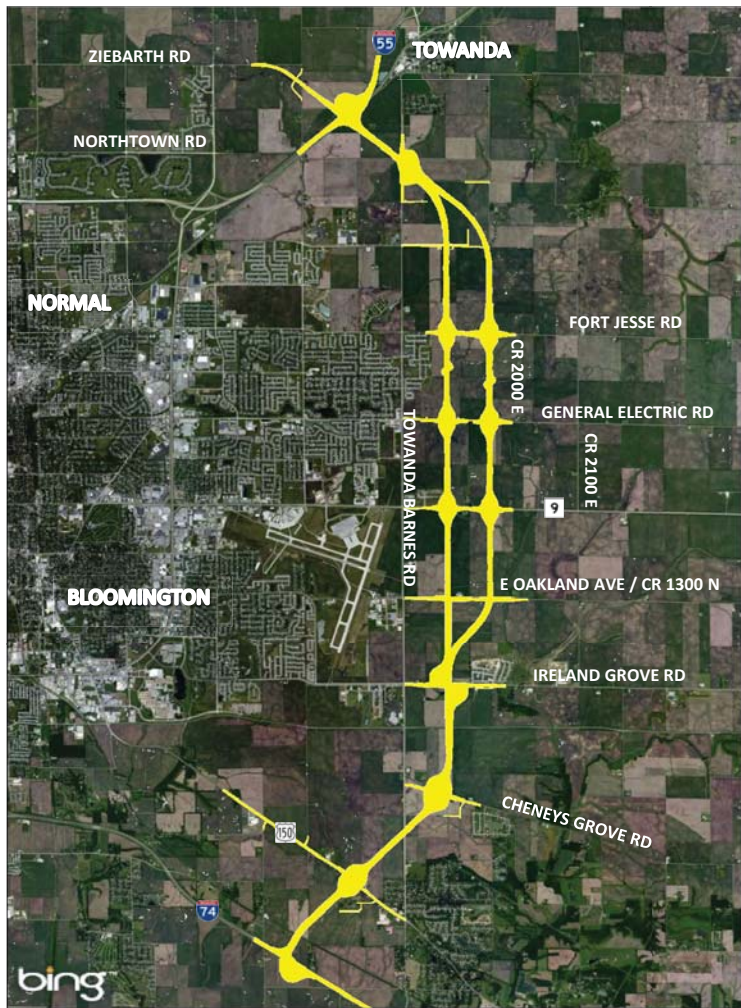


AGRICULTURAL IMPACTS

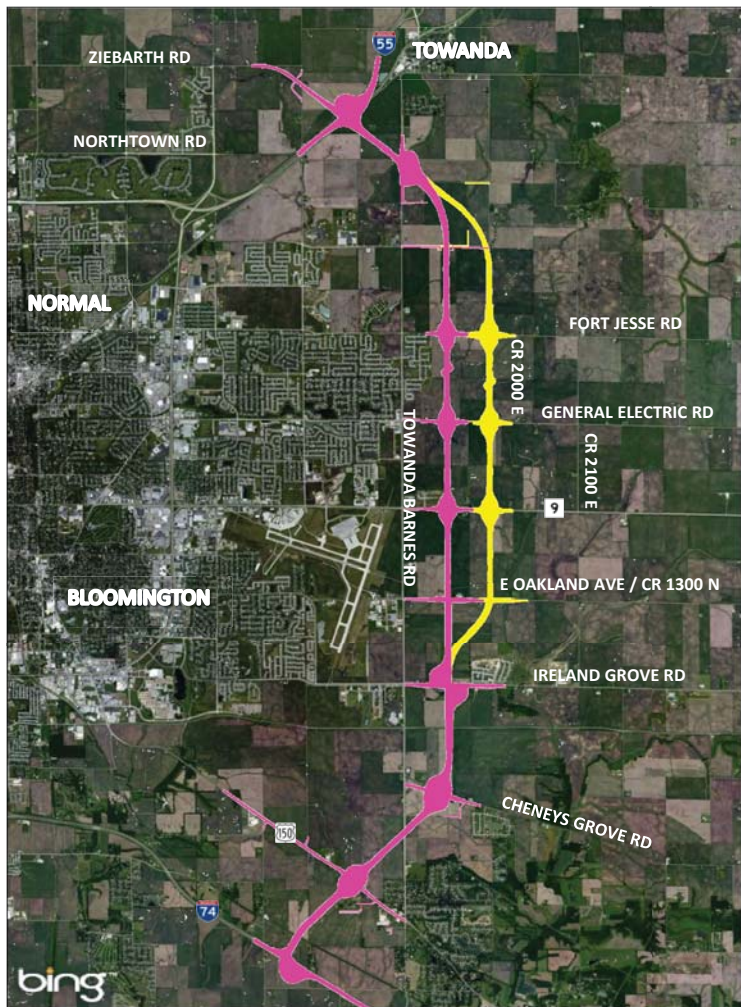
Category	Alternative	
	126	127
Prime and Important Farmland (acres)	777	794
Farm Residences (number)	10	6
Farm Outbuildings (number)	42	30
Diagonal Severances (number of tracts)	8	10
Lateral Severances (number of tracts)	3	1
Severance Management Zones (acres)	40	53
Adverse Travel (miles)	21.5	22.8
Tracts with Access Change (number of tracts)	11	9
Farms Otherwise Affected (acres)	23	25
Uneconomical Remnants (number)	23	25
Landlocked Parcels (acres)	181	200

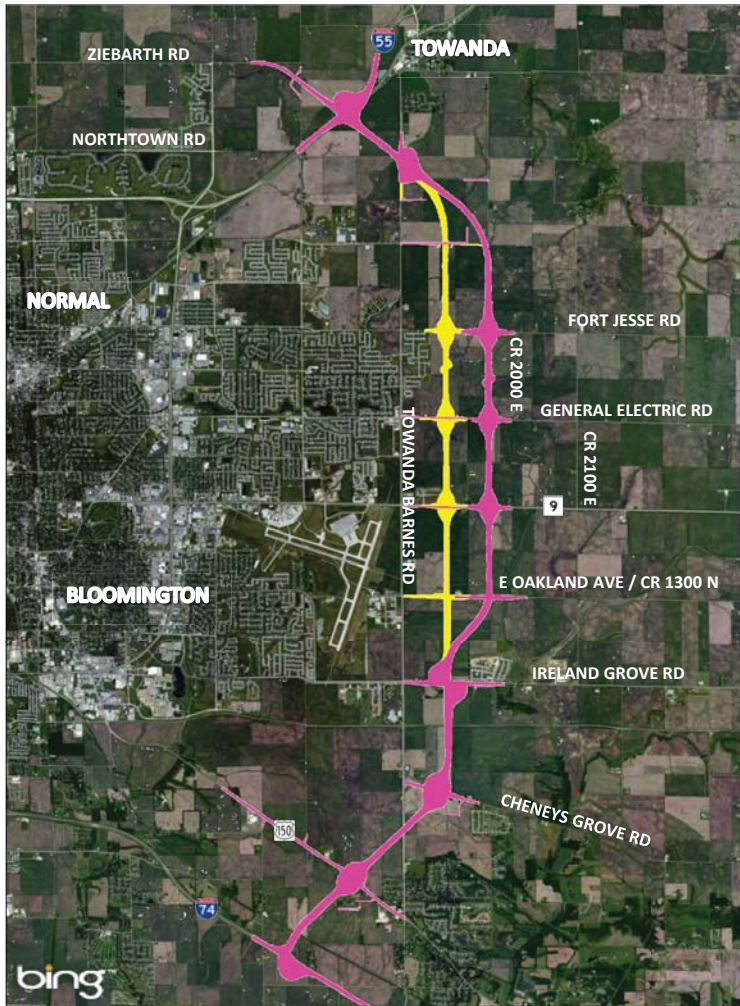


Remaining Alternatives

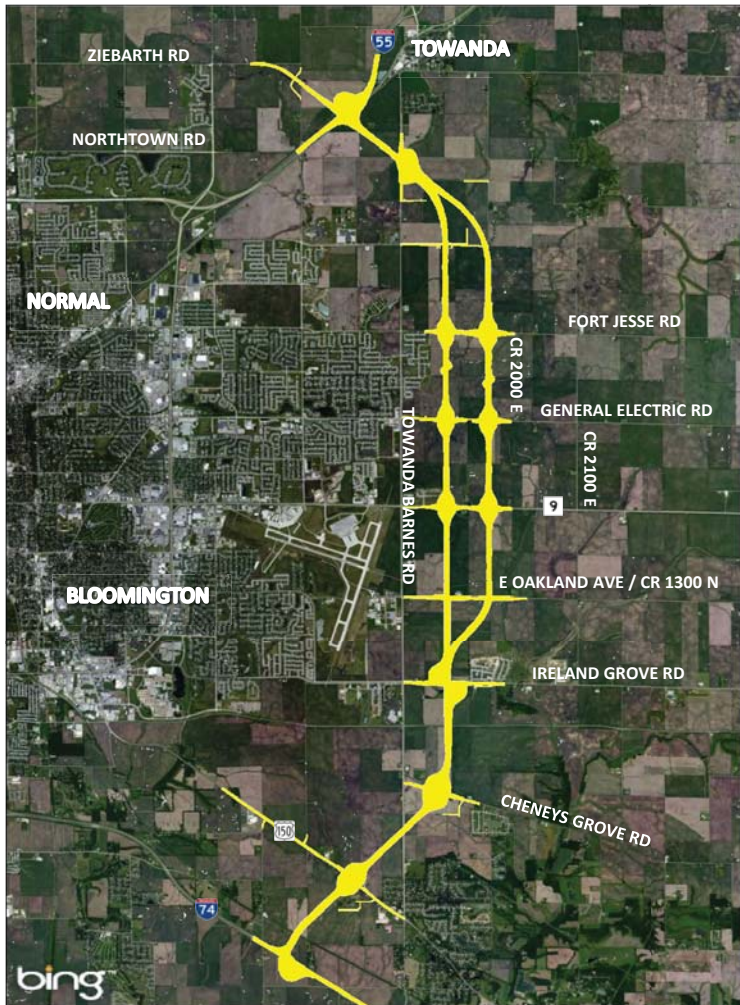


126





Remaining Alternatives



TIMELINE



- Public Information Meeting (PIM)
- Study Milestone
- Public Hearing



CONTACT US

Website: www.eastsidehighway.com

E-mail address: ESHEA@clarkdietz.com

Fax: (217) 373-8923

Phone: (217) 373-8901



WELCOME!



DATE

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

AGENDA

An identical, brief presentation will be given at the following times:

6:10 p.m.

7:10 p.m.




Purpose

The purpose of the meeting is to review the alternative evaluation process, present the remaining alternatives, and seek public input on a Preferred Alternative.

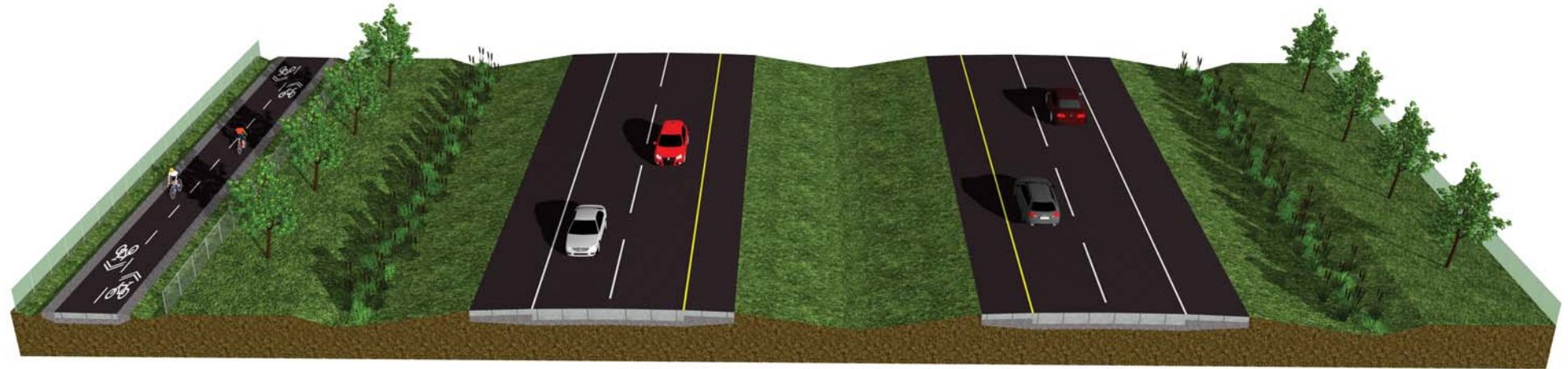


TIMELINE



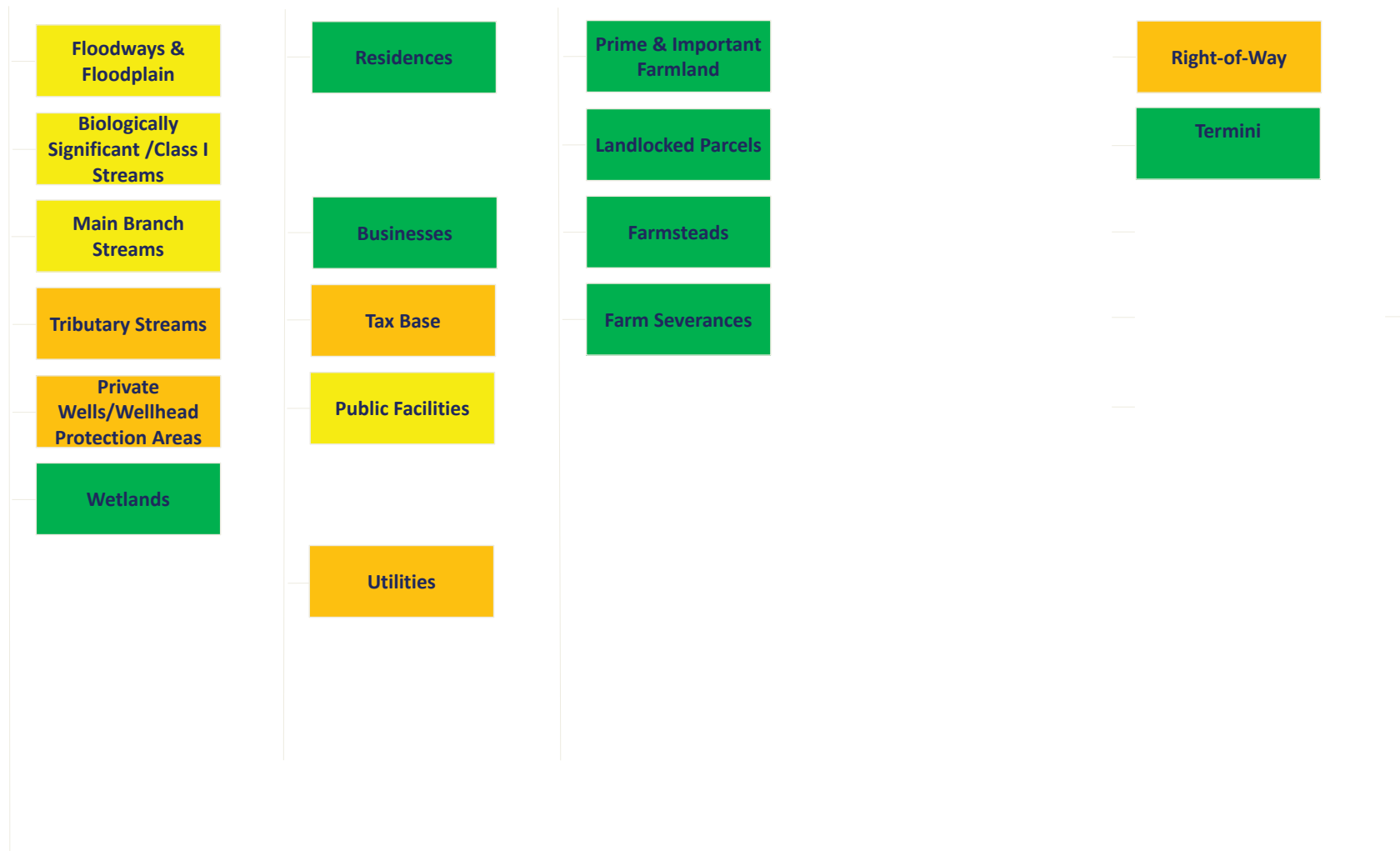
-  Public Information Meeting (PIM)
-  Study Milestone
-  Public Hearing

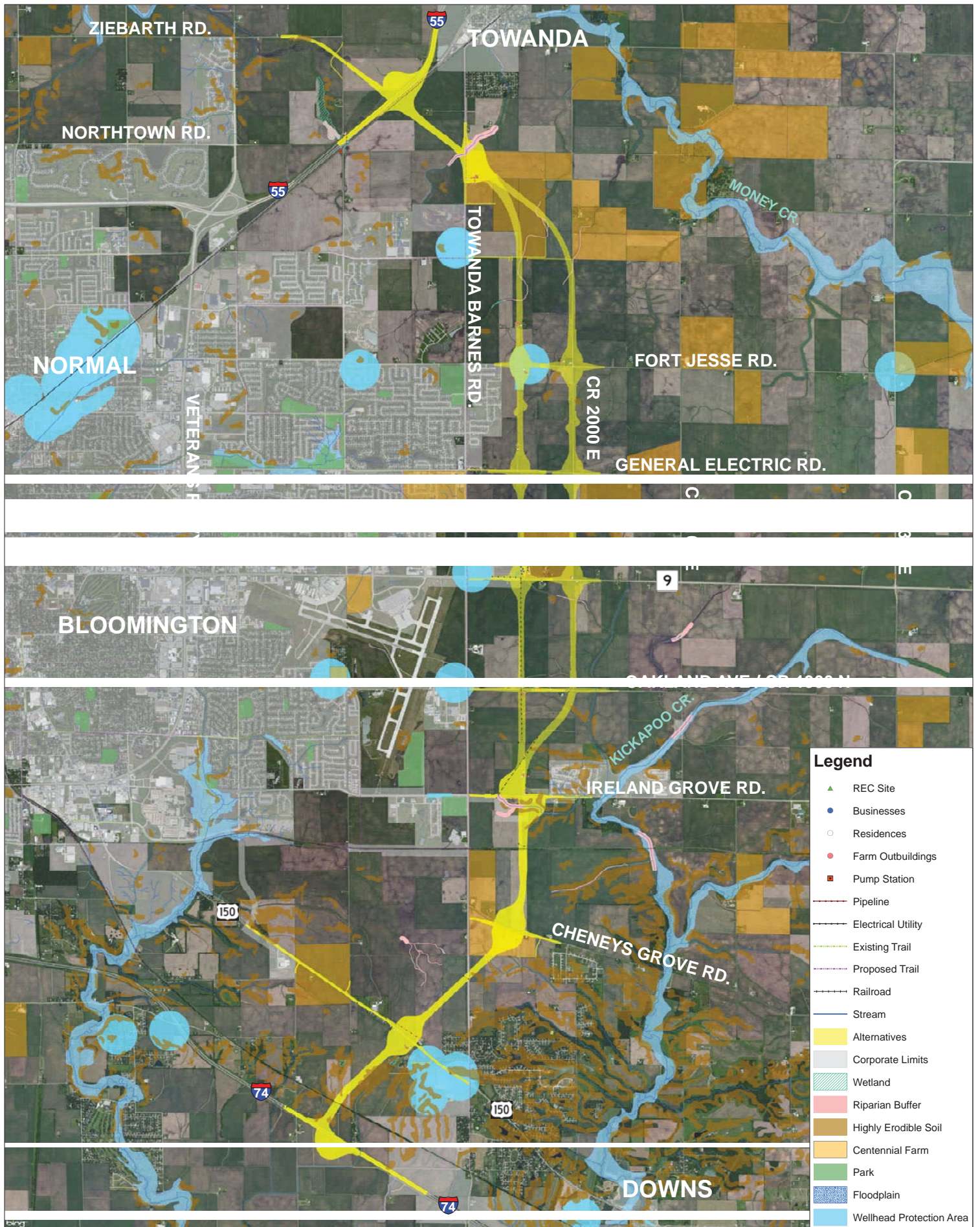
TYPICAL SECTION

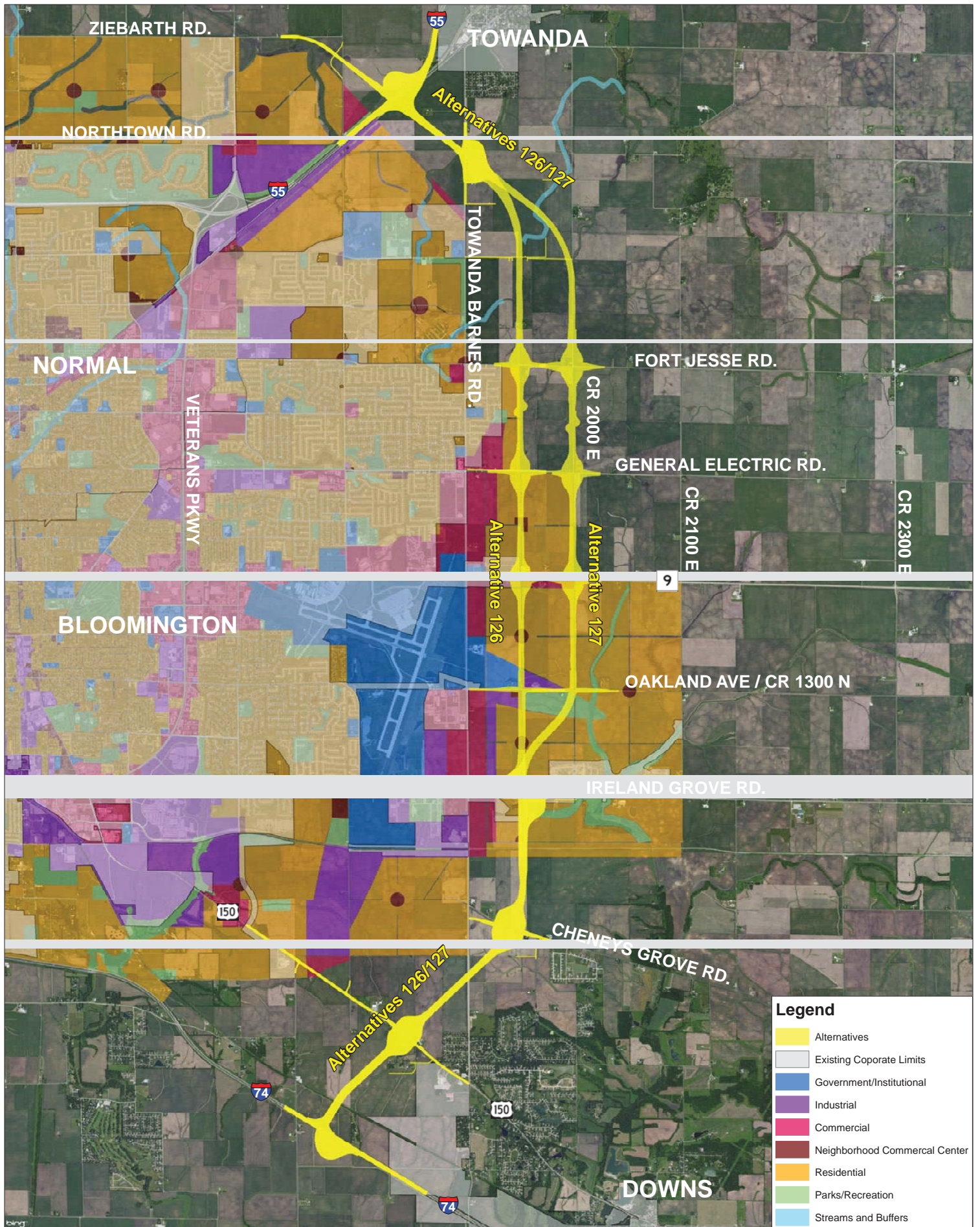




ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA

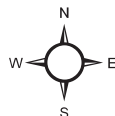






2035 Land Use

June 19, 2013



Legend

- Alternatives
- Existing Corporate Limits
- Government/Institutional
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial Center
- Residential
- Parks/Recreation
- Streams and Buffers



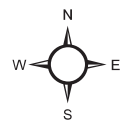
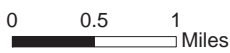


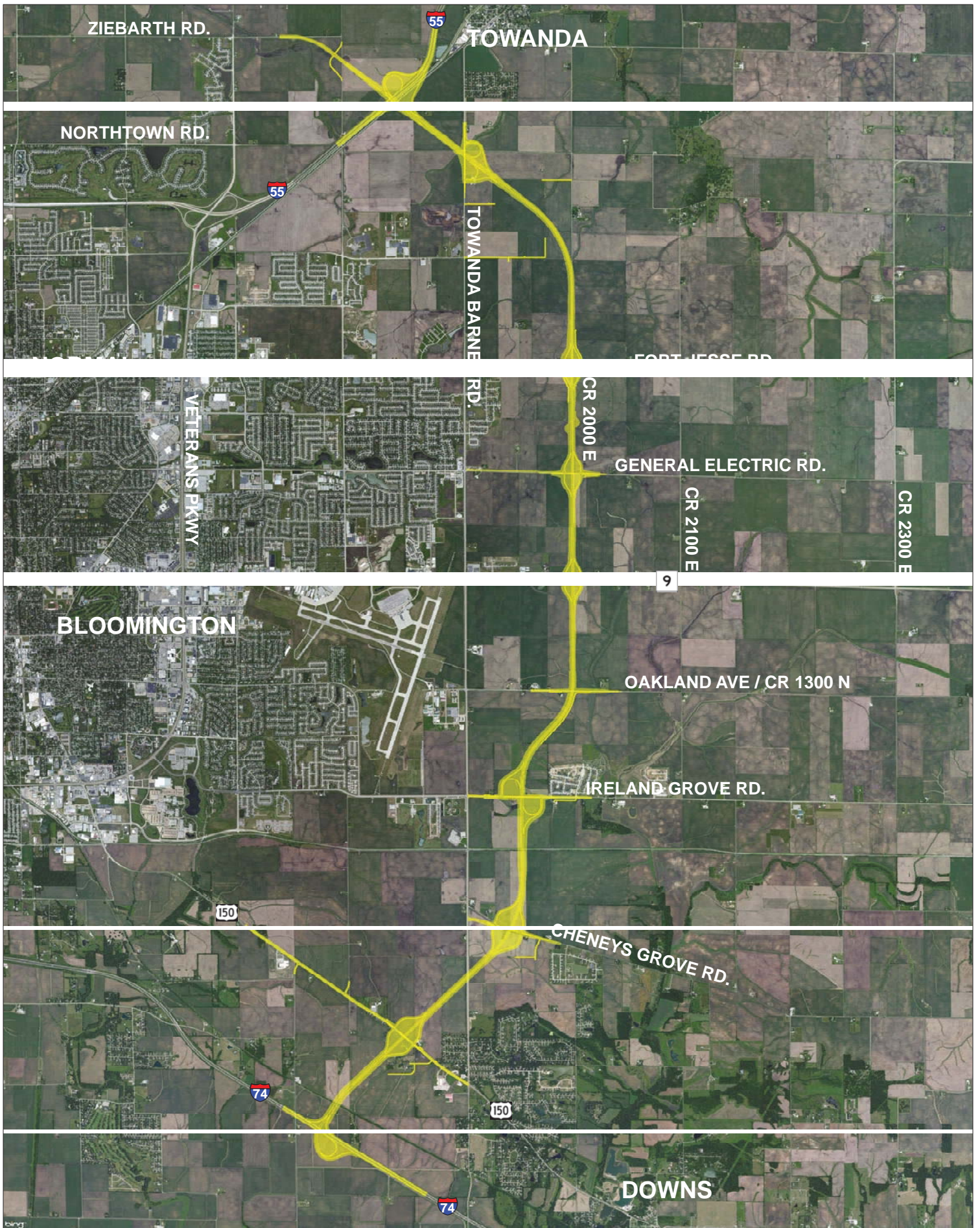
Alternative 126

June 19, 2013

Legend

- Pavement
- Right-of-Way



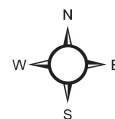


Alternative 127

June 19, 2013

Legend

- Pavement
- Right-of-Way



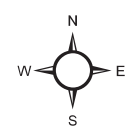
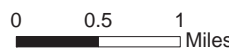


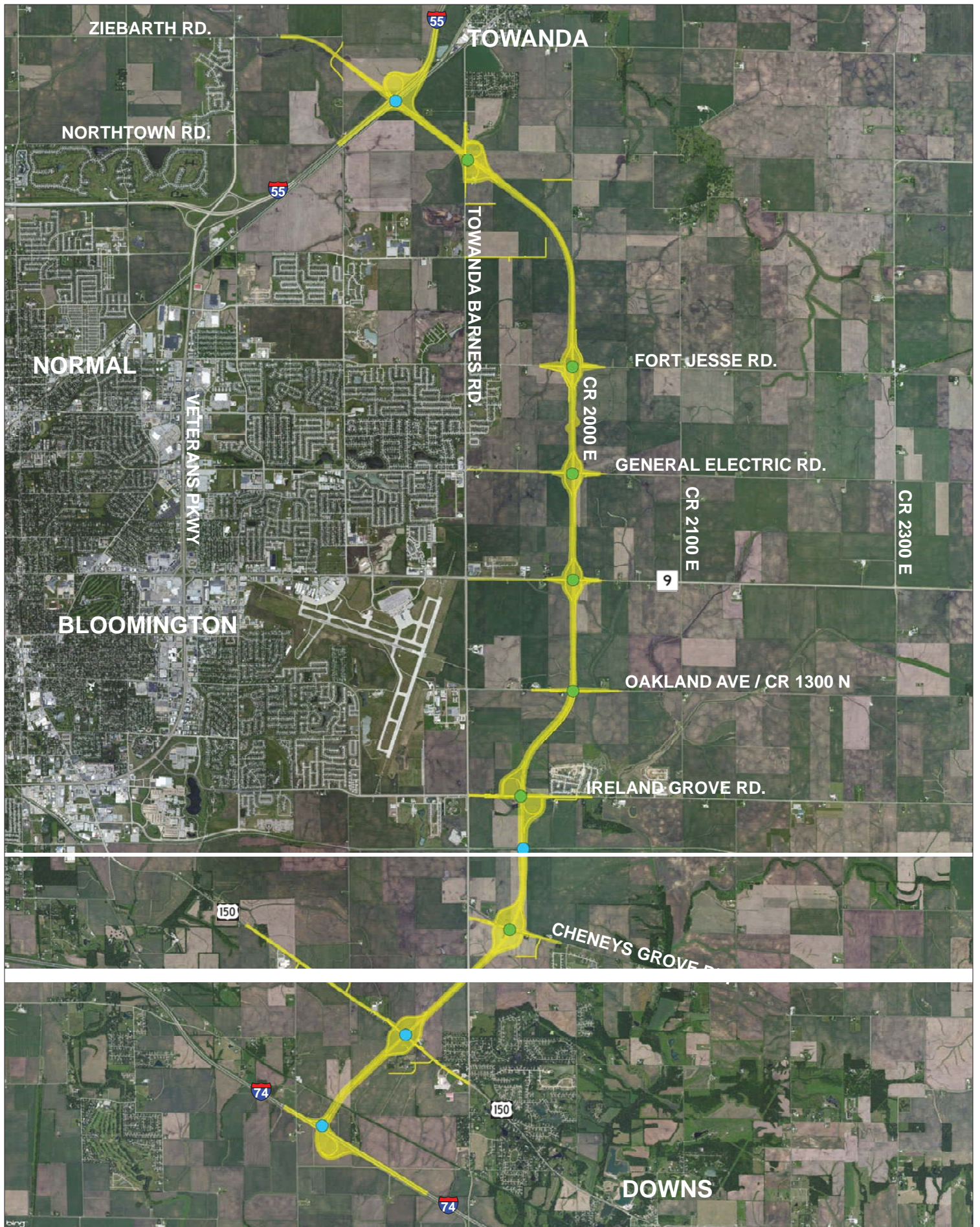
Alternative 126

June 19, 2013

Legend

- Pavement
- Right-of-Way
- Underpass
- Overpass



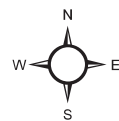
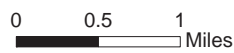


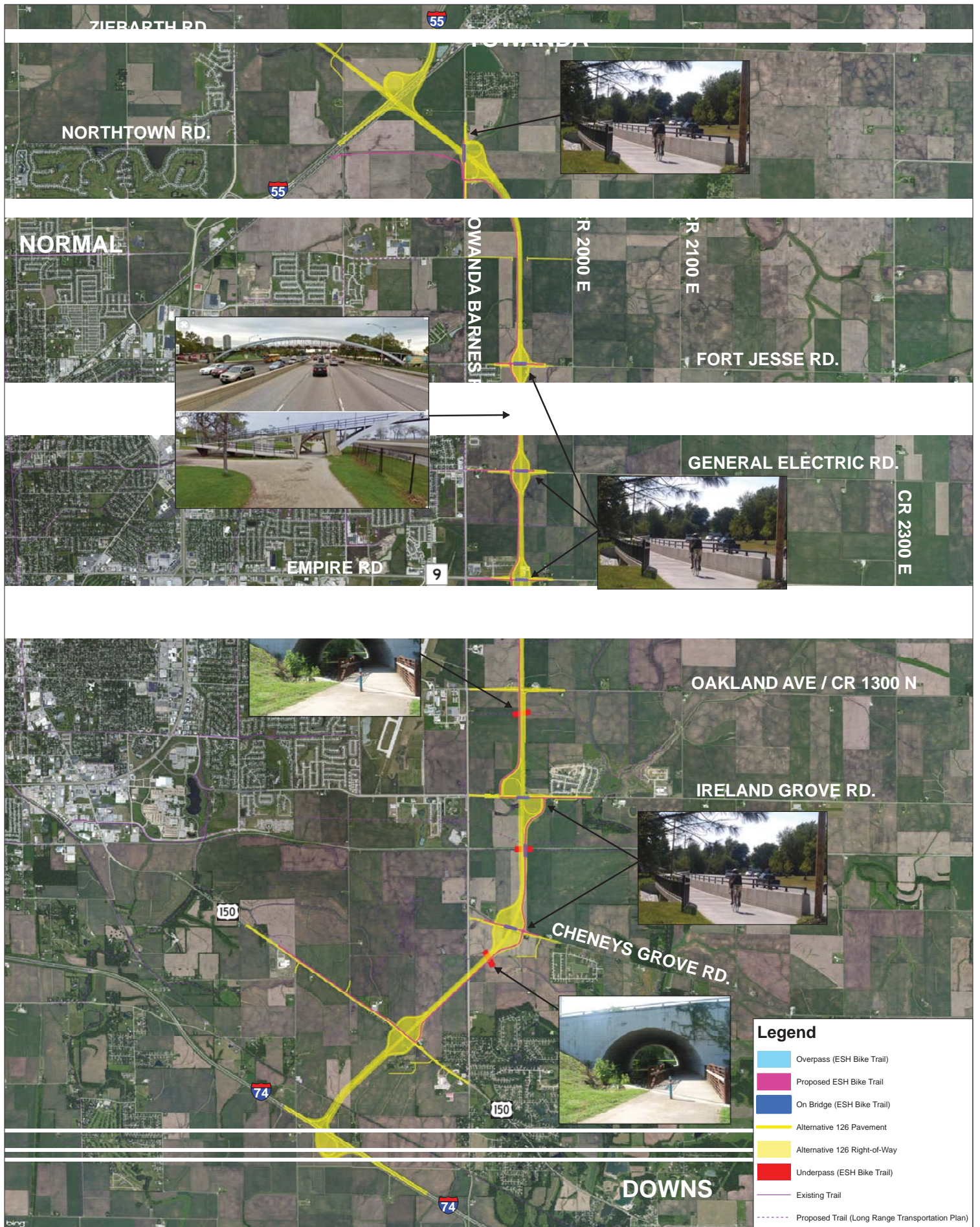
Alternative 127

June 19, 2013

Legend

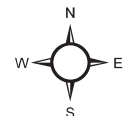
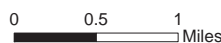
- Pavement
- Right-of-Way
- Underpass
- Overpass

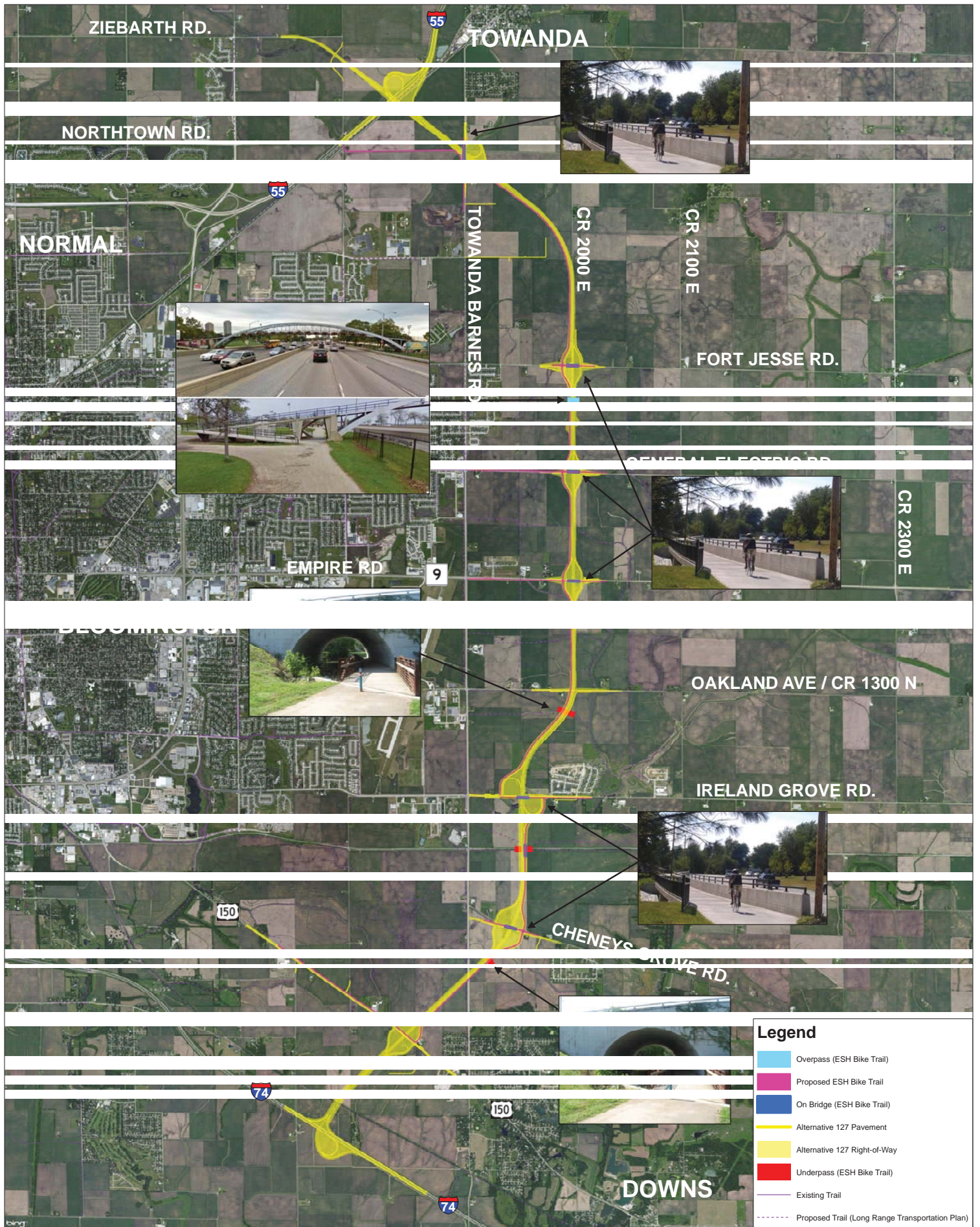




Alternative 126 Multi-Use Path

June 19, 2013



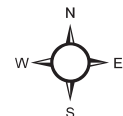
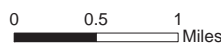


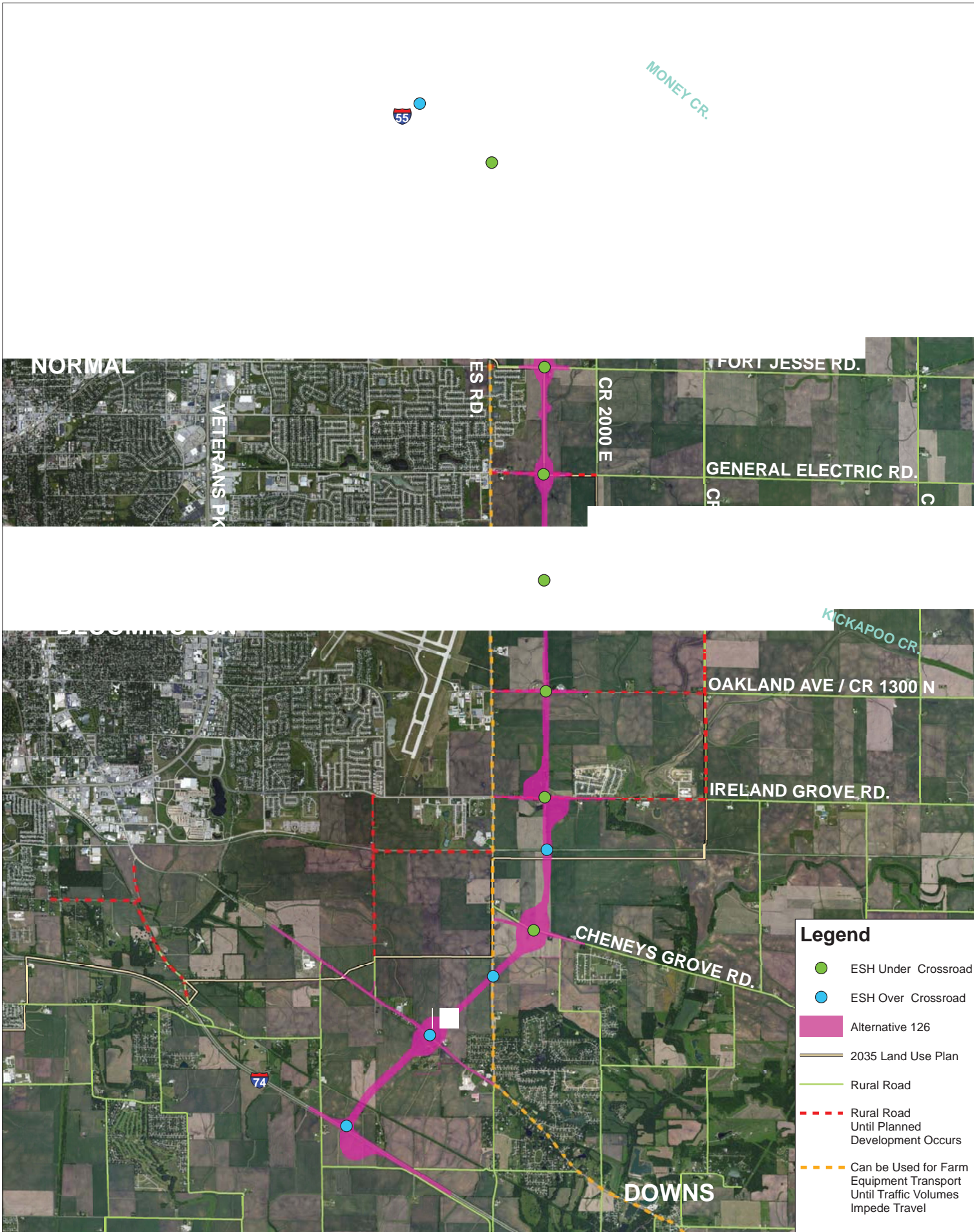
Legend

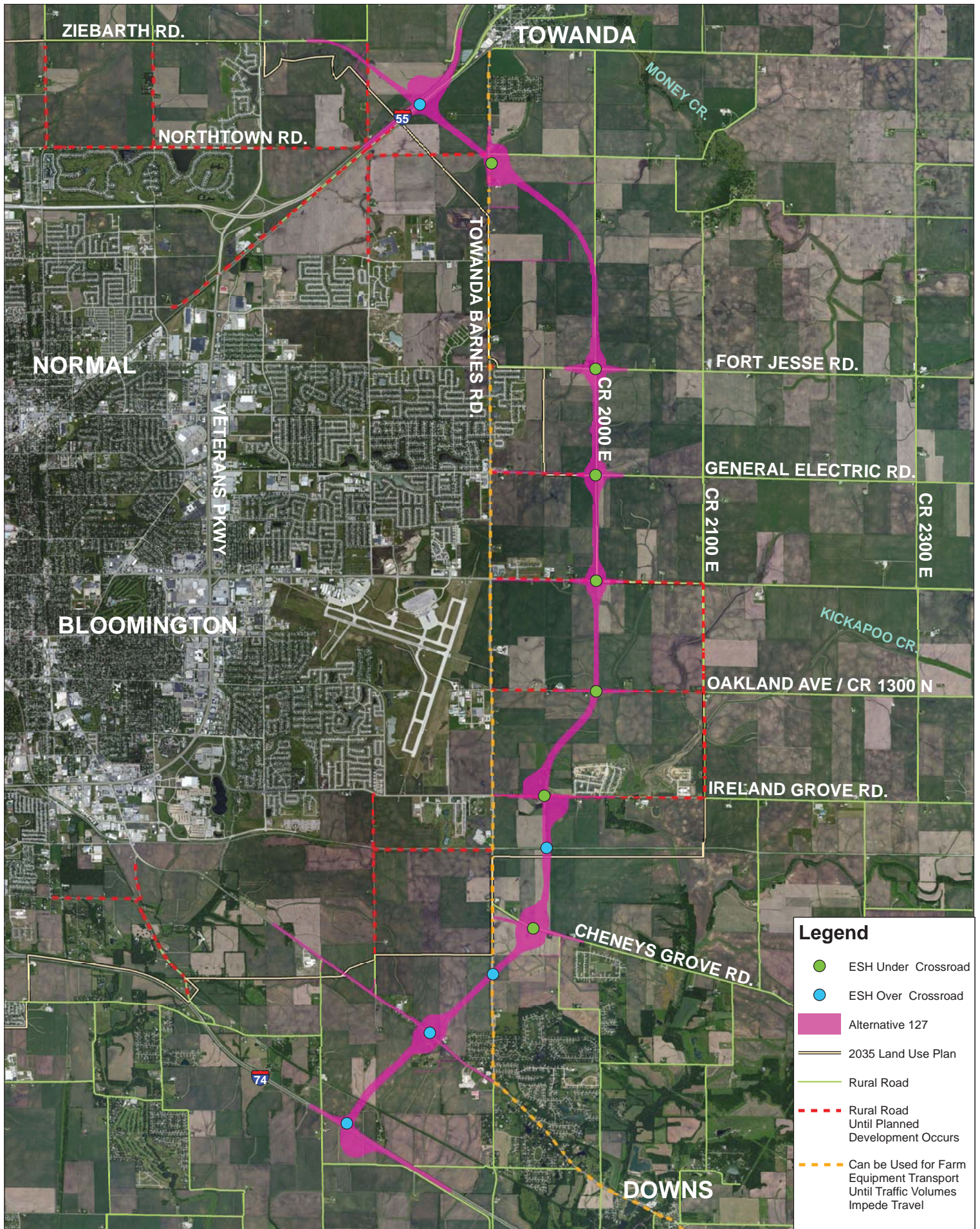
- Overpass (ESH Bike Trail)
- Proposed ESH Bike Trail
- On Bridge (ESH Bike Trail)
- Alternative 127 Pavement
- Alternative 127 Right-of-Way
- Underpass (ESH Bike Trail)
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail (Long Range Transportation Plan)

Alternative 127 Multi-Use Path

June 19, 2013



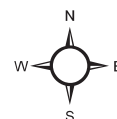




Future Rural Road Network

June 19, 2013

0 0.5 1 Miles



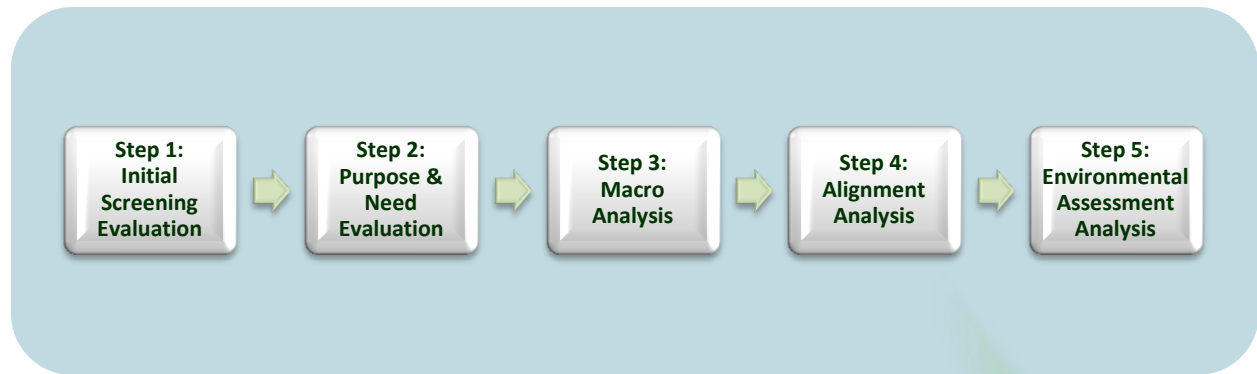


ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Introduction

The East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) is a transportation planning study administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and McLean County. A total of 129 ESH alternatives were developed during the course of the project. The alternatives were screened using a five-step evaluation process, illustrated below.



The first four steps were presented at the August 18, 2011 and January 11, 2012 Public Information Meetings (PIMs). As a result of the evaluation process, four alternatives remained for consideration at Step 5, the Environmental Assessment Analysis, which was presented at the June 19, 2013 PIM.

Environmental Assessment Evaluation

Four alternatives were considered in the Environmental Assessment Analysis. Resource impacts resulting from the alternatives were calculated. Resource categories included environmental, community and economic, agricultural, cultural, and sustainability. Engineering design criteria were also evaluated.

Resources where impacts varied widely among the four alternatives were considered differentiating criteria, which are used to screen the alternatives. These resources are wetlands, special waste, residences, businesses, utility infrastructure, noise receptors, agricultural features, and sustainability features.

Two of the four alternatives were eliminated due to high wetland impacts and engineering design issues at I-55. The remaining two alternatives (Alternatives 126 and Alternative 127) are shown on a map on the following page. One of these alternatives will be recommended as the Preferred Alternative. The resource impacts resulting from the alternatives are summarized in a table provided in this packet.

Public Comment

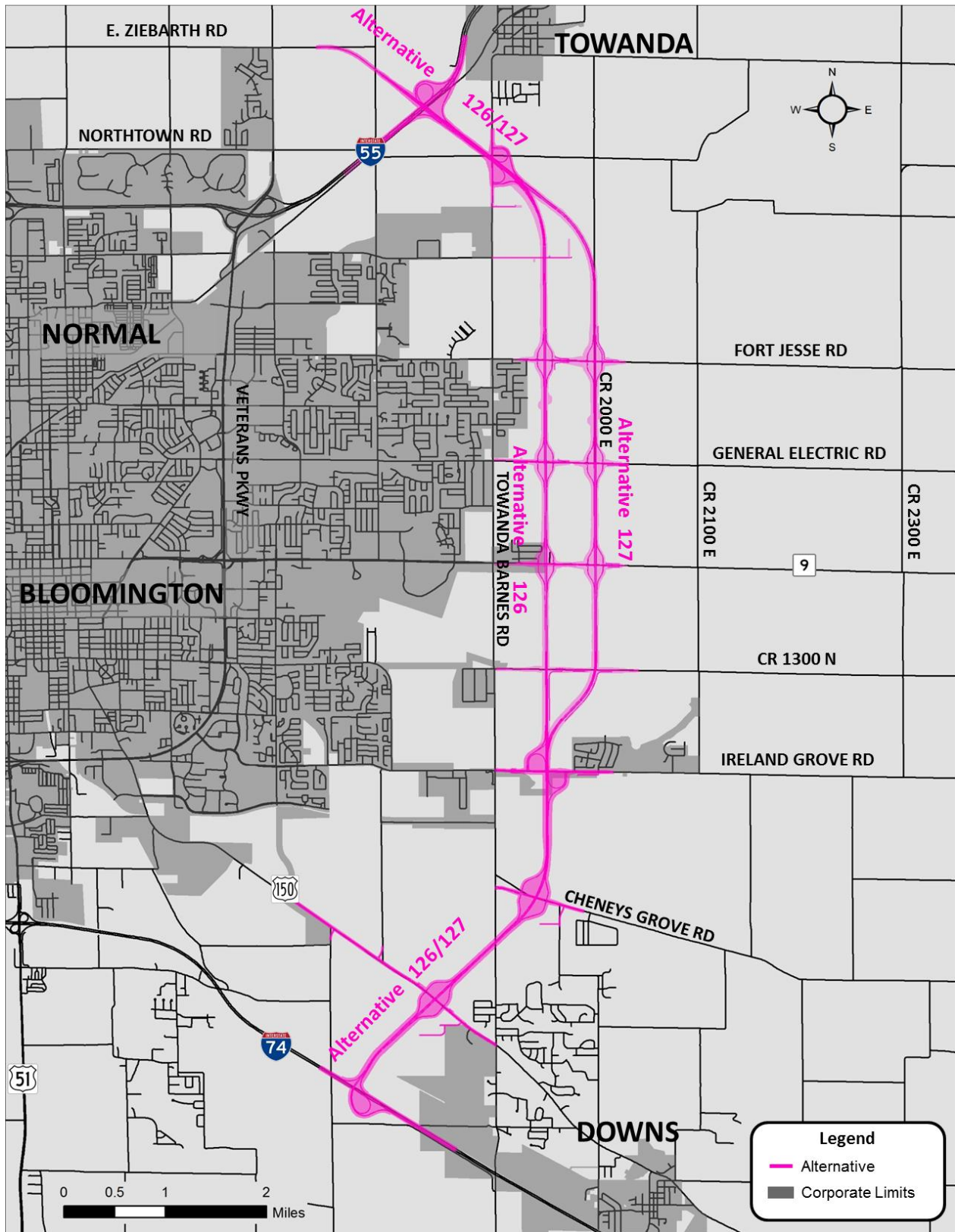
Public input is sought on Alternative 126 and Alternative 127. A comment form is attached for your use. Comments can be submitted via mail (see mailing information on comment form in this handout), email (ESHEA@clarkdietz.com), or fax (217-373-8923).

When commenting on the alternatives, please be specific as to which alternative you think should be selected as the Preferred Alternative and why. Please refer to the impact summary table in this packet to support your decision. The official public comment period closes on July 3, 2013. The public comments will then be reviewed and summarized, and presented to Federal and State resource agencies.

Preferred Alternative

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative.

A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the FHWA and the Federal and State resource agencies in September 2013. At the meeting, each agency representative must give concurrence on the recommended Preferred Alternative in order for the project to move forward. The resource agencies can choose to select the No Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative if they find that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the September meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing.



Map of the Remaining Alternatives: Alternatives 126 and 127 are identical at the northern and southern ends. The alternatives differ in the middle portion. Alternative 126 is located approximately 0.5 mile west of Alternative 127. The alternatives are two-lane freeways with access at major east-west roads.



Environmental Assessment Evaluation Summary Table (Part 1 of 2)

Category	Alternative		Description of Impacts
	126	127	
Wetlands (acres)	0.71	0.0003	Alternative 126 impacts one additional wetland along IL 9 (Empire Road).
Special Waste (number of sites)	18	15	Most special waste impacts are fuel storage tanks on farms. Alternative 126 has more impacts due to the impact at the Prairie Commercial Park along IL 9 (Empire Road).
Residential Displacements (number)	18	13	Most displaced residences are houses or farm residences outside of subdivisions, and are scattered throughout the project area.
Business Displacements (number)	7	0	The business displacements occur at the ESH interchange with IL 9 (Empire Road). The cluster of businesses is the Prairie Commercial Park. Alternative 126 would displace the seven business buildings.
Utility Infrastructure (number affected)	33	5	Alternative 126 impacts mostly single utility poles. Alternative 127 impacts mostly electrical transmission towers. The cost of relocating the utilities is expected to be higher for Alternative 126 than for Alternative 127.
Noise Receptors (number within 500 feet of alternative)	167	152	Most noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the roadway edge. Noise levels were not determined, but the number of noise receptors within 500 feet shows the potential for noise impacts by proximity to each alternative. Traffic noise is an important concern for residents. Specific traffic noise impacts and mitigation will be completed for the Preferred Alternative.

Environmental Assessment Evaluation Summary Table (Part 2 of 2)

Category	Alternative		Overview of Impacts
	126	127	
Agricultural Criteria:			<p>Eleven metrics were used to assess the cumulative effects of the alternatives upon agricultural operations. Alternative 126 would displace more farm residences and outbuildings than 127, and also requires more access changes. Outbuilding loss and removing residences from tracts can affect farm operations. Alternative 127 would require more acres of prime and important farmland, more severance management zones, more uneconomical remnants of farmland, more landlocked farm parcels, and creates more total adverse travel for agricultural operations than Alternative 126. Additionally, Alternative 127 follows CR 2000 East. Existing CR 2000 East provides a north/south route for farm equipment; if this road is replaced by the ESH, it will no longer allow farm equipment direct access to property, nor provide a rural road route for farm equipment. Replacement of this north/south route for farm equipment for Alternative 127 is not included in the impact analysis.</p>
Prime and Important Farmland (acres)	777	794	
Farm Residences (number)	10	6	
Farm Outbuildings (number)	42	30	
Diagonal Severances (number of tracts)	8	10	
Lateral Severances (number of tracts)	3	1	
Severance Management Zones (acres)	40	53	
Adverse Travel (miles)	21.5	22.8	
Tracts with Access Changes (number of tracts)	11	9	
Farms Otherwise Affected (acres)	23	25	
Uneconomical Remnants (number)	23	25	
Landlocked Parcels (acres)	181	200	
Sustainability Criteria:			<p>Farmland preservation was the greatest differentiator when considering sustainability criteria. Farmland preservation was measured by estimating the area between the 2035 Land Use Plan boundary (per local comprehensive plans) and the alternatives. The total area of agricultural land outside of planning boundaries was smaller for Alternative 126 compared to Alternative 127. The difference occurs north of GE Road. The planning boundary was constrained in this area by the difficulty to provide infrastructure improvements, such as sewer and water, due to watershed separation. It is reasonable to conclude that this area may not experience development at the same pace as areas that are within the 2035 Land Use Plan.</p>
New Pavement Required (acres)	232	239	
New Right-of-Way Required (acres)	890	905	
Farmland Between Alternative and 2035 Land Use Plan (acres)	2,388	3,117	
Farm Tracts Between Alternative and 2035 Land Use Plan (number)	103	115	
Highly Erodible Soils (acres)	26.9	28.8	

The resource descriptions, sources of data, and methodology of impact assessment is listed on the following page.

Resource Descriptions

Wetlands

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Federal Register 1982) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Federal Register 1980) jointly define wetlands as: "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions". Wetlands include forested areas, wet meadows, and a variety of habitats exhibiting the hydrology, soils, and vegetation required by the USACE.

Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) requires federal agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of wetlands, and avoid direct and indirect impacts whenever there is a practicable alternative. Avoidance of wetlands was of first importance in evaluating alternatives. All known high quality wetlands were specifically avoided, and minimizing wetland impacts was an important criterion in evaluating alternatives. In characterizing impacts to wetlands, any wetland area within the footprint was measured.

Special Waste

Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) are defined by ASTM as sites where the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substance or petroleum product on a property under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release, or material threat of any hazardous substance or petroleum product into structures on the property or the ground, ground water, or surface water of the property. RECs include sites that have reportedly accepted and stored hazardous substances or that have a record of accidental spills or dumping as well as a variety of activities associated with managing and storing wastes. The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) completed a database search of special waste sites in the study area. In characterizing impacts to special waste, any special waste site that lies within the alternative footprint is counted as one impact.

Residences

Homes were identified within the alternative limits based on information from ESRI (Environmental System Research Institute, Inc.) data, Google Maps, and public feedback. Buildings were located by the project team using aerial photography and verified with field visits. The buildings identified as residences were compared to business and public facility buildings in order to remove duplicates.

A residence was considered impacted if any part of the building structure is located within the alternative limits. Only the residential structure was counted as being impacted; freestanding garages or other structures on the respective property were not counted as impacts. Residential buildings under construction were counted. Farmsteads were included in the count of residential buildings.

Businesses

Commercial buildings were identified within the alternative limits based on information from ESRI (Environmental System Research Institute, Inc.) data, Google Maps, and public feedback. Buildings were located by the project team using aerial photography and verified with field visits. The buildings identified as businesses were compared to residences and public facility buildings in order to remove duplicates.

Businesses (cont.)

A commercial property was impacted if any part of the building structure is located within the alternative limits. Commercial impacts were computed as each commercial building impacted. Several commercial properties incorporated multiple buildings. Each building was counted as a separate commercial building.

Utility Infrastructure

Utilities evaluated include antenna structures, radio/microwave towers, and electrical facilities (substation). Utilities were identified from database searches and aerial photography and were verified during field visits. Antenna structures and radio/microwave tower information were identified from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) database (<http://wireless.fcc.gov/antenna/>). In identifying impacts to utilities, if any portion of the utility infrastructure is located within an alternative, it is counted as one impact.

Noise Receptors

IDOT defines a sensitive receptor as a land use where frequent outdoor human activity occurs and where a low traffic noise level would be of benefit. Sensitive receptors include homes, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and parks. Most noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway. Each sensitive noise receptor within 500 feet of the alternative was considered a potential impact. Traffic noise modeling, impacts determinations, and abatement analysis will be completed for the selected Preferred Alternative.

Agricultural Criteria

Prime and Important Farmland

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 7, Volume 6, Section 657.5(a) defines prime farmland as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. Prime farmland does not have to be cleared; however, it cannot be urbanized, paved, or permanently under water.

The digital format Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soil maps were used to measure potential prime and important farmland impacts. The digital soil maps identify each soil type designated as prime and important farmland. In characterizing impacts to prime and important farmland, any soil type designated as prime and important farmland within the alternative footprint was measured and rounded to one acre. Developed areas, including existing roadway under pavement, are not considered prime and important farmland and were subtracted from the total acreage.

Farm Residences

Land on a farm parcel used for residential purposes. Farmsteads were located by the project team using aerial photography and verified with field visits. In characterizing impacts to farm residences, if any portion of the alternative crosses a farm residence it is counted as one impact per residence.

Farm Outbuildings

Farm outbuildings refer to structures separated from the farmstead and include barns, stables, sheds, and storehouses. Outbuildings were located by the project team using aerial photography and verified with field visits. In characterizing impacts to outbuildings, if any portion of the alternative crosses a farm outbuilding, it is counted as one impact per structure.

Agricultural Criteria (cont.)

Diagonally and Laterally Severed Tracts

Severed farm operations occur when a new roadway divides a farm either laterally or diagonally, and separates one or more tract from others within a single farm operation. If an alternative takes farm land on the edge or perimeter of a farm tract, this is not a severance. Farm tracts were obtained from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In characterizing impacts to farm tracts, if any portion of the alternative severs the parcel and the severance results in less than 25% of a parcel separated from the remainder of the parcel, it is counted as one impact. A severance was determined if an alternative bisected a tract and resulted in two unconnected tracts. A severance was also determined if greater than 1/3 of the tract was taken by an alternative.

Severance Management Zones

Severance management zones are those areas within or adjacent to severed parcels used to measure the disruption to normal farming operations. Triangular shaped farmland remnants are the basis of many of the problems caused by diagonal land severance and right-of-way takings that are not square with the farmed acreage. In characterizing impacts to farm severance management zones, if any portion of the alternative footprint resulted in farmland not square with the farmed acreage it is calculated as the additional area (acre) per parcel to square the farmed land.

Adverse Travel

Adverse travel occurs when a new roadway causes additional travel distance from one part of a farm operation to another part. Added travel is typically caused by severance of a farm operation by a new roadway or by a road closure, and is calculated as the one-way mileage per field visit. Adverse travel equals the old trip distance minus the new trip distance times two. This represents one round trip per year.

Tracts with Access Change

An entrance or frontage road used to access a farm tract contained within an alternative was counted as an impact. An access change was determined if an alternative left a tract landlocked. Without considering the current owners/operators or access for current landlocked tracts, if the alternative resulted in a landlocked tract, it was counted as an access change. Severances with two unconnected tracts, of which one was landlocked, were also counted as an access change.

Farms Otherwise Affected

Farms otherwise affected are tracts that are either completely taken by an alternative or less than 1/3 of a tract was taken by an alternative but the tract is not severed. Farms otherwise affected also included severed tracts where the resulting farmable area was less than five acres.

Uneconomical Remnants

Uneconomical remnants are severed portions or landlocked portions of a property where the owner is left with an interest after the partial acquisition of the owner's property, and the acreages may have little or no value or utility to the owner. Each uneconomical remnant, less than five acres in area, was counted as one impact.

Landlocked Parcels

A land-locked parcel is created by the taking of right-of-way for road construction in such a way that remaining land is not accessible by a public road or permanent easement after construction. Land-locked parcels were determined by overlaying parcel boundaries on the alternative footprint. A resulting parcel not accessible by a public road is counted as one impact.

Sustainability Criteria

New Pavement

The area of new pavement required to construct each alternative was calculated. The area of pavement included the pavement required for the mainline roadway, collector distributor roadways, interchange ramps, and east-west road improvements. The total area of new pavement required was calculated to determine the amount of new impervious area that will be constructed for each alternative. This was determined by subtracting out the area of existing roadway pavement from the area of total pavement. As the amount of impervious area increases, storm water quality may decrease, and the quantity may increase, which can have a negative effect on surrounding ecosystems.

New Right-of-Way (ROW)

The utilization of existing roadway within an alternative was evaluated. The existing roadway could not be used as-is, but rebuilding a potential improvement in the same location as the existing roadway has benefits regarding ROW needs, potential simplification of construction staging, economic benefits to the furnishing of materials during construction, and positive public perception. For sections that run parallel to existing road, the amount of existing ROW was subtracted from total ROW acquisition. Acreage of ROW along existing roadways was assumed to be 66 feet for local roads and 200 feet for interstate freeways.

Farmland Preservation

The Farmland Preservation criterion was divided into two sub criteria that measured sustainability as it relates to farmland preservation. The first measured the area of farmland consumed outside of the 2035 land use plan (as shown in the *Regional Plan*), and the second measured the number of farm tracts, located between the 2035 land use plan and each alternative.

Farmland between Alternative and 2035 Land Use Plan

The 2035 land use plan for the project area shows increasing amounts of urbanized land in areas currently used for agriculture. Because of this, portions of the alternative areas that are currently in agricultural use are planned to be taken out of agricultural production as development occurs. The area of each alternative was evaluated to determine the amount of farmland remaining (current agricultural tracts as measured by Common Land Units, obtained from the State of Illinois) between the alternative and the 2035 urban/developed land. Larger impact numbers for this resource illustrate higher potential farmland impacts as a result of private development, and greater potential for leapfrog development.

Farm Tracts between Alternative and 2035 Land Use Plan

A secondary measure of farmland conversion outside of the 2035 land use plan, the number of farm tracts located between the boundary of urban uses in the 2035 land use plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

Highly Erodible Soils

Highly erodible soil types are defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) US Department of Agriculture, and are soils with a maximum potential for erosion greater than average erosion rates. The digital format NRCS soil maps were used to identify highly erodible soils. In characterizing impacts to highly erodible soil, any soil type designated as highly erodible within the footprint was measured.

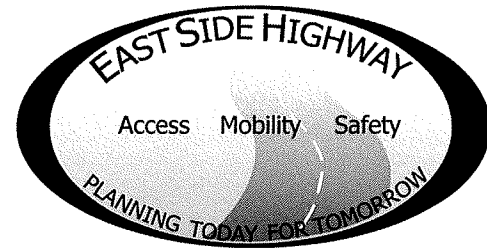
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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Clark Dietz, Inc.
Attn: Mr. Jerry Payonk, P.E.
125 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Fold Back First

General Comments:

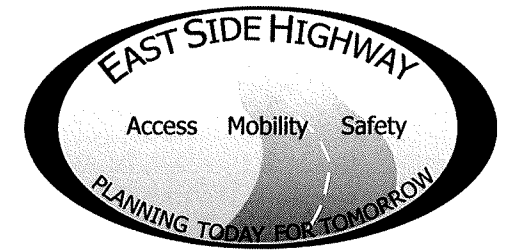


EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

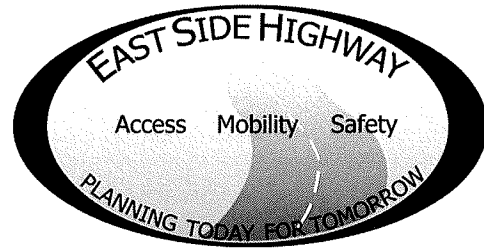
Public Information Meeting No. 5

June 19th, 2013 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Mike James	Village of Downs	211 S. Seminary, PO Box 12	830-7374	Mayor@VillageofDowns.org
John Furt	DREAMCATCHER FARDS	1855A US Hwy 150 B'n DL		LAFOUERT@GMAIL.COM
Diane Short		122 Eugene St Towanda	838-7227	dianejshort@gmail.com
Alan Reeser	Self	19066 Woodland Trail	662-5500	aread24@hotmail.com
Dave King	Self	1 Brookline Ct Blington	808-2171	dking3@DTNSPEED.NET
KENT MEESTER		10196 Old Sawmill Run	530-7524	meisterke@aol.com



EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

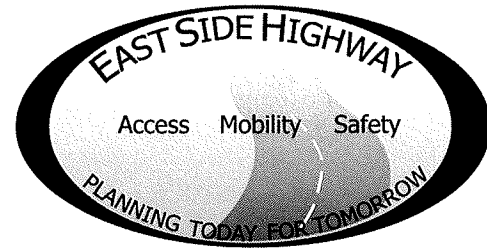
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Josiah Townsend		5306 Langfield Rd	480.243.6997	tbaws@hotmail.com
DAVID SALET		BLOOMINGTON	309-663-4520	SAINTRAI DR @ HOTMAIL.COM
Chris Behl		3503 Wine Way	661-2412	
Jim Jenkins		4011 Fullerton Rd Blm 6175	838-2087	ScottZack2000@yahoo.com
JIM HEIDBRINK		19671 NEWGATE BLM	378-2608	
Doris Reaser		19066 Woodland Trail Bloomington	662-5500	dreaser7@hotmail.com
Kyla Heath Hunziker		3913 Rave Rd BLM	224-232-9822	Kylahunziker@hotmail.com
DANNY WILSON		22699 E 1600 N RD	309 728-2295	
GARY ANDERSON		20859 1750 N Rd	309 728 2723	

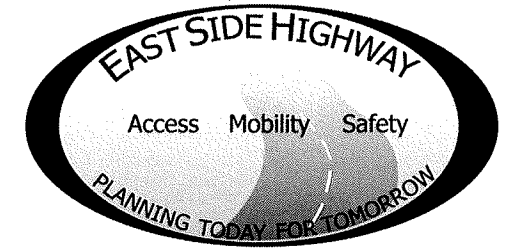


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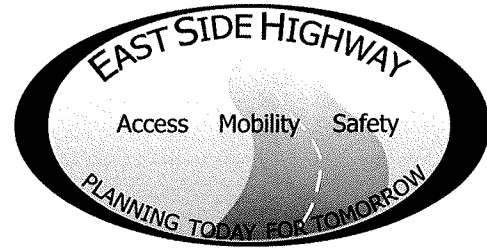
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Mike McCarrier		1812 Kell Ave Bloomington, IL 61705	309-212-0641	mmccarrier@live.com
KRISHNA BALAKRISHNANT		500 BEECHWOOD Cir, NORMAL, IL 61761	248 703 3410	krishna_nb@yahoo.com
Horace McIvor		4712 Rockledge Road Bldg 61705		
Mboia Mulambani	City of Bloomington	3107 Copper Lake Bloomington	309-530-7664	ward3@cityblm.org
KIRK GUSTAFSON		3711 RAVE ROAD	402 617 3588	KIRK, GUSTAFSON@COMCAST.NET
Jill & Doug Durr		3505 Wine Way	661-0489	jilldurr@yahoo.com
RICK MRKACAK		21 LAVENDER LN -61704	664-6475	XLSCITATION@GMAIL.COM
TRACY BURR		4 lavender lane- 61704	661-4566	burrtracy@comcast.net



EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

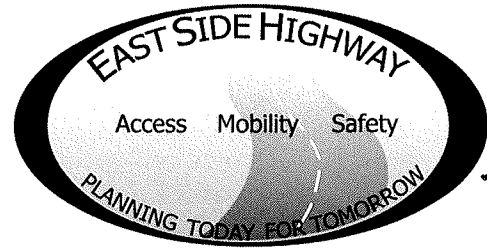
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June 19th, 2013 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Alan + Jessica Oester		2209 Tyler Trail Bloomington, IL 61705	708 284 8035	alanoester@gmail.com
Michael + Allison Stephey		55 Dry Sage Bloomington IL 61705	309 825 7179	michaelstephey@yahoo.com
MICHAEL HUDELSON		2821 Chesapeake Ln Bloomington, IL 61704		michael_hudelson@hotmail.com
Richard A Brown	NBHOA	2210 Nolo Road Normal IL 61761		rallynbrownil@gmail.com
Bob Miller	Self	4018 Parkledge Rd Bloomington, IL		rolemiller@gmail.com
Mark + Jill Savage		19545 E 1600N Normal, IL 61761	309-838-3708	jill@jillsavage.org jamsavage7@yahoo.com
Scott Peterson		10096 Old Sawmill Rd Blm 61705	309-378-0063	speterson4040@yahoo.com
Clark Brooks		19620 Brick Dr.		cljbrooks@MCHSF.com
David Abrams		8874 Cherokee Circle Bloomington 61705	309-750-1000	dabrams231@hotmail.com
Ron Hoffbauer				

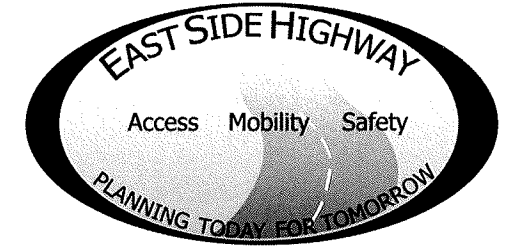


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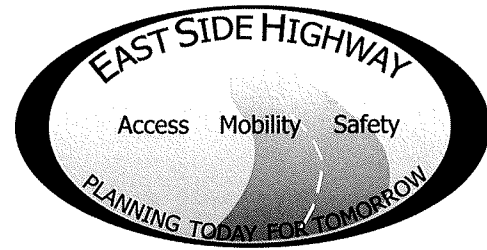
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
RACHEL WELLS	PANAGRAPH			
Rod, Jeanne, Andria Merkle	Citizens of the CLOVE	1507 Kell Ave. Bloomington		rjamertle@msn.com
Jim Karch	City of Bloomington			jkarch@cityblm.org
Charlie Moore	Mickan County Chamber/Commere			charlie@mickan.cochamber.org
EVAN MAHAN	Citizen			evanmahan@hotmail.com
Jason Barickman	State Senate			
Brian Stratman		5 Dry Sage Circle, Bloomington 61705	309-807-4000	Brian.Stratman@hotmail.com
EUGENE L. FULLER		15085 OLD COLONIAL RD BLOOMINGTON IL 61705	309 8280771	
SUSAN LUKE		10 HARVEY RD - DOWNS IL	309/275-3038	Camille SUSAN@theLukes.us
TIM KRAFT		2114 E. 1900 NORTH RD TOWANDA IL 61776	309/ 728-2772	



EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

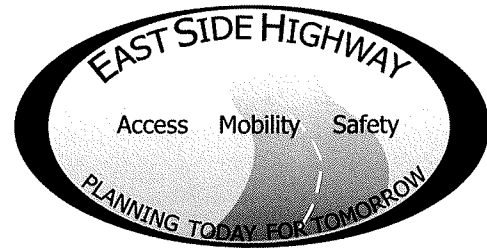
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Brian Abamont		3911 Baywood Rd	807-2034	B.k.Abamont@gmail.com
Jeanne Bozarth	Land Owner Farmer	4746 Ireland Grove Rd.	663-2609	
Homer Bozarth	Land Owner Farmer	11 11 11	11 11	
Bice & Jinda Brummel	Form owner	7 SMITH CANE PONTIAC IL	815-844 7778	
Bill Jensen		2433 Grey Fox Tr. B4		
Audy Schwster	Land owner	9 Dry Sage Cir	661-8631 309- 460	atschus@yahoo.com
Jane Foss	Land Owner	10026 Wolf Hill Rd B1K	309-378-1000	foss.t@gmail.com
Jane Miller		4018 Rockledge Rd	618-604-1002	rulemiller@gmail.com
DOUG GRAVESTEN	CDI	2805 Pheasant Run	309-830-8855	douggrovesteen@comcast.net

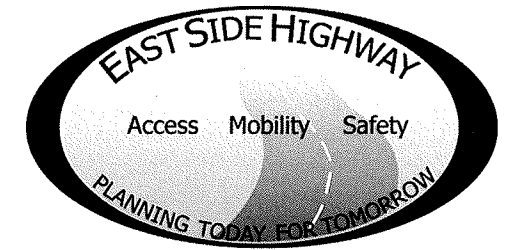


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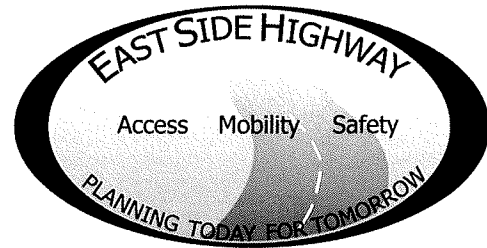
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Daniel Burr & Katherine Burr		4 Lavender Lane	(309) 661-4566	burrtracy@comcast.net
Carlo Robustelli		401 E. Anne St.		
Kevin Kothe		19149 Meander Way		kkothe@cityblm.org
PAUL RUSSELL	MCRPC			paul@mcplan.org
CHRISTINA FRIEDEWALD		PO Box 76 8115 N 2000 East Rd Downs	(309) 660-8060	cfriedewald00@gmail.com
STEVEN NALESKI		324 VISTA DR BLOOMINGTON	664-0501	NALESKI5@FRONTIER.COM
DALE M. SUTTER		19 SPRING RIDGE CIRCLE	663 8282	
Mike & Cathy McFadin		20195 MURRAY Hill Rd.		mike@mmcfadin.net
JOHN PUZANSKAS		14080 Rhodes Rd., BLOOMINGTON 61705	309-828-6089	Puzanskas@GMAIL.COM
SCOTT LACKEY	IDOT/DSLIR		217-466-7252	scott.lackey@illinois.gov

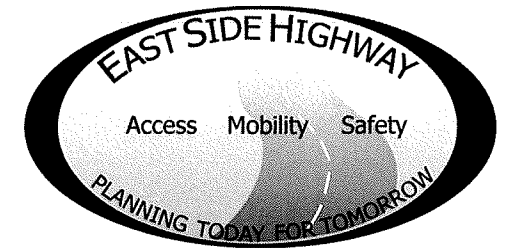


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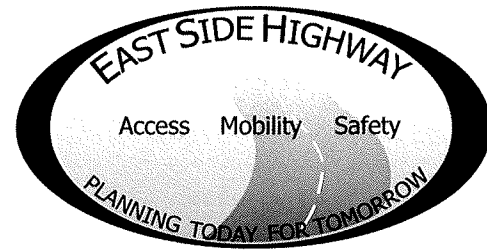
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Tony Penn	Laborers Local 302	2012 Fox Creek Rd Bloomington	309-828-4368	jpblm.laborers@frontier.com
Travis Holt		4004 Fullerton Rd Bloomington	217 652-5137	avrakis_07@yahoo.com
Chris & Susan Bellotti		8 Brookline Ct Bloom	309 6640578	bellottifam@gmail.com
SCOTT DOUGLAS	GROVE HOA	1301 RED ABBEY AVE BLOOMINGTON 61705	404 451 1533	SCOTTDUGLAS.RLA@GMAIL.COM
Diane Quijano	Grove HOA	5019 Londonderry Rd Blm 61705	309-661-0173	Quijano5761@gmail.com
Jeff Crabill		2 Mary Hall Ct	309 808-0938	jeff.crabill@comcast.net
Meta Mickens-Baker	Unit 5 Board of Education	3314 Stonebridge Dr. Bloomington, IL 61704	309-662-4010	mickensm@unit5.org
JEFF Smith	MCLEAD PEA PART	PO Box 6155 Bloomington IL 61706	309-6854	jeffrey1smith@yahoo.com
Mary Calvert		1216 Eastport Dr. Unit A Bloomington & Towanda	309-663-2260	
Chris Weisiger	Homeowner	6 Dry Sage Circle	309-661-1406	cweisiger@yahoo.com

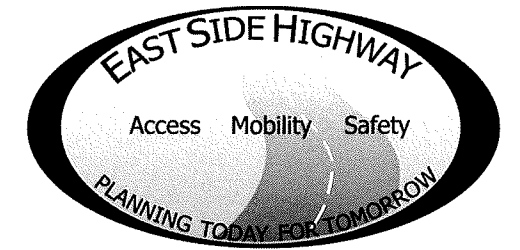


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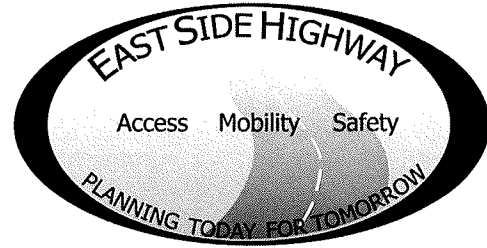
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Nancy Raycraft		19626 Lakewood, Bl'm 61705	309-378-4462	nraycraft@gmail.com
Philip Dick	McLean County	819 W. Washington	309-824-2551	philip.dick@mcleancountyl.gov
Jennifer Sicks	MCRPC	115 E. WASHINGTON ST. M103	309-828-4331	
Jean & Mel Brown		1014 Broadway, Normal	309-451-5601	mjbrown1014@yahoo.com
Adam Ghrist				awghrist@yahoo.com
Julie Bennett	McLean Co Board member	PO BOX 374 McLean, IL 61754	309-838-0342	miminit@yahoo.com
Frank Wieting		3205 MORRISSEY DR Bloom IL 61705	309-662-1909	wieting18@Frontier.com
Wilma Wieting	-	3204 Morrissey Dr., Bl'g 61705	309-662-1708	-
Lynn & Rex Diamond		2915 Fox Creek Rd	309-585-0606	
Karen Hanson		4 Deerfield Ct, Blomngtn ⁶¹⁷⁰⁵	309-808-1366	ckhanson4@comcast.net

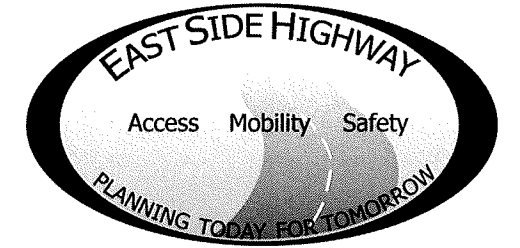


**EAST SIDE HIGHWAY
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

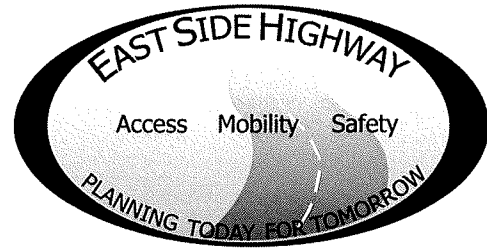
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
DIANO BON/AM, N		77248 E 1100 21-RD E. SWANT L		
Hunter Waldschmidt	FHWA	1516 7 Pines Rd. Springfield	608-843-7747	h.waldschmidt@dot.gov
Nolan King		1412 Watersound Way Bloomington, IL	309-287-0322	
Neale Mcormick		427 Standish Dr, Bloomington	309-662-573	
Paul Krueger		18001 US Hwy 150	824-0193	
Sherry + Steve Shipley		111 Olive St Dowanda	728-2849	
Karen & Jack Melzer		83 Dry Sage Cir Blofa	661-6553	
Patricia Kelley		21441 E. 1600 North Rd. Normal	309-728-2702	JKelley9@dtnspeed.net
andy Katchmar		16 Dry Sage Circle	815-674-3939	ajkatch45@gmail.com
KEN Sommers		1506 RATHMORE RD	309-663-4038	ken.sommers.aypk@statefarm.com

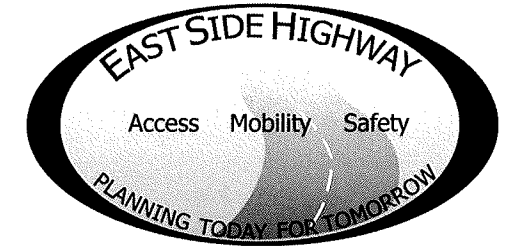


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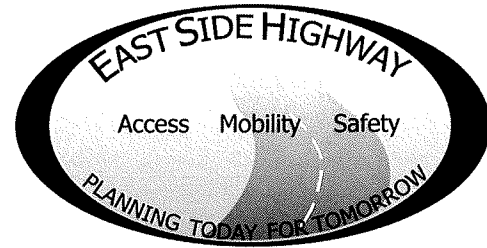
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Jean Sheets	Harvest Pointe	Bington 75 DRY SAGE CIR 61705	309 662-0062	
Carmen J. Gresham	Private Citizens	19419 Cheneys Grove Rd. Bl., Il, 61705	(309) 662-1069	N/A
Barb Jurgens	Private citizen	103 Delane Ave Towanda, IL 61776	(309) 728-2194	
Jeff Aelle	private citizen	79 Dry Sage Cir Bim. IL 61705	309 808.3119	-
Jessica Aelle	private citizen	79 Dry Sage Cir BIM, IL 61705	309.808.3119	-
Billy Walden/Melissa Walden	private citizens	1201 Norma Dr Bloomington IL 61704	309-532-3077	
George Gordon	McLean County Board	2 Kent Drive Normal, IL 61761	309-452-8530	
Steve: Joan Beattie	Private Citizens	2901 Benson Lane Normal, IL 61761	309-242-0052	
Mary A Devine	Private Citizen	9624 N 2200 EAST Downs	309 24-8437	
Daniella M. Devine	Private Citizen	9626 N. 2200 East Rd Down	309/724-8437	

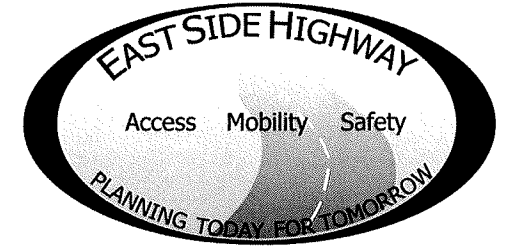


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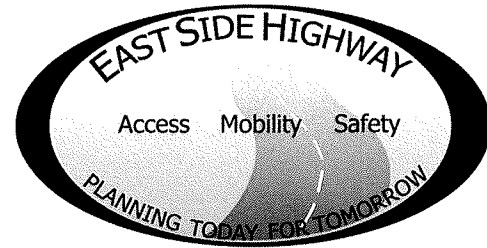
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
R. W. Parker		120 EUGENE ST	309-728-2332	ROD.PARKOR@LIVE.COM
MAURICE JONES		18264 N 2150 E. RD	309-728-2605	
DON LYNN		10344 LYONHEART BLVD	309-261-1864	
JAMIE MANZELLA		10393 LYONHEART LN, BLVD	309-846-0564	
Audrey Williams	News 25/HOI 19			
Teresa Manzella		10393 Lyonheart Ln. Blvd	309-846-4865	tmanzella0726@gmail.com
Jim Brandt		7 Lake Bluff Ct	309-827-9186	
Julie Stier		2275 North Bridge, Normal	309-310-3010	kjstier@yahoo.com
Gene Megli		20405 E MADONNA BL	662-5185	
Terry L. Adreon AND Suzy Adreon		9520 N. 2200 E. R Downs	309-724-8034	

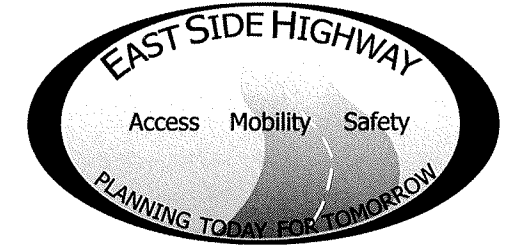


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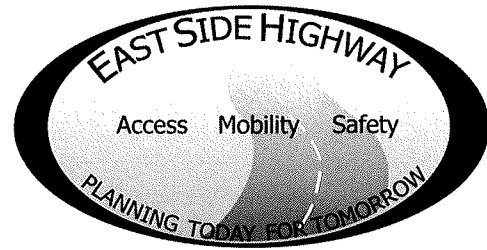
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Bryan Kennedy		3 Swayze Ct. Bloomington 61705	309-662-3833	bryan-kennedy@alumini.purdue.edu
MARU + BERRY LEUCK		19985 OAKWOOD DR BLOOMINGTON IL 61705	309-838-5519	GLIKE16@MCHSI.COM
TRACIE CALDWELL		10363 Lynheart Ln Bloomington IL 61705	309-838-5778	tlcaldwell1971@gmail.com
MIKE + BONNIE KOZLOWSKI		1307 GAINESS DR BLOOMINGTON IL 61705	309-808-0046	
JOHN BISHOP		9932 OLD SAWMILL ROAD BLOOMINGTON, IL 61705	309-662-3164	LLAMBISHOP@MSN.COM
ERIC + NAOMI ACOSTA		3909 ROCKLEDGE RD BLOOMINGTON, IL 61705	309-838-2468	earnd193@yahoo.com
PHIL MERRITT		2220 NORTH BRIDGE DR Normal IL 61761		phil.merritt@comcast.net
Heather McCormick		19958 Murray Hill Rd Blm IL 61704		seanheather@yahoo.com
Sean McCormick		19958 Murray Hill Road Blm, IL 61704		seanheather07@yahoo.com
Mike Hall		PO Box 3132, Bloon. 61702	706-5351	ParkLandsOffice@gmail.com

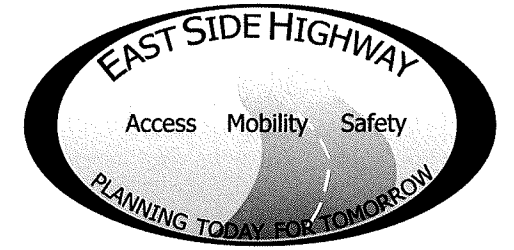


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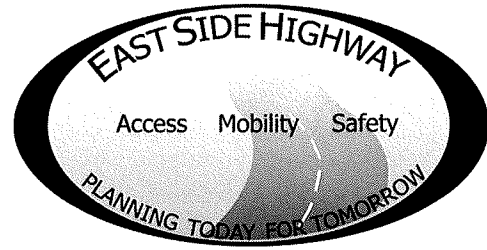
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
ERIC SCHMITT	MCLEAN COUNTY		(309) 663-9445	
MYROW WILLIAMS	Retiree	510 S. TOWANDA BARNES ROAD BLM, IL 61705	309-663-1203	
Bruce Waffziger		1570 Kell Ave Blm 61705	309 532 0249	bpnaffy@comcast.net
Dale Strain	Homeowner	2712 Riverwoods Ln Blm 61705	309-826-5592	dale.dalestrain.net
KEITH HANSON	Homeowner	9094 N 2000E RD Bloom 61705	309-398-4416	ACAS@HOTMAIL.COM
Keith Nettie Hanson	"	"	"	"
CHARLES JUSTICE	RETIRED RESIDENT	3504 ARMSTRONG DR BLOOMINGTON	309-661-8185	JUSTALA@MSN.COM
JOHN BOLDT	CLARE DIRTZ	5017 GARRIN BAY ROAD KANSAS WA	262-657-1550	
KEN BILL	Resident	3306 BARRINGTON RD Bloomington		
Joe Hack	ON LIST Resident	3703 BALDOCCHI DR. Bloomington IL 61704	309 661-1627	



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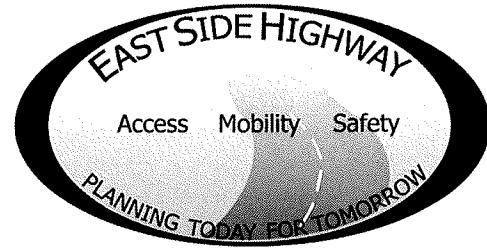
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June 19th, 2013 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Peggy Miles	Resident	61705 2212 Riverwoods Ln	309-826-5591	peggy@dalestrain.net
Bonnie J. Mitchell	Resident	61705 8802 N 1750 E Rd Blm.	309-825-3414	
Suzann Eleniush	Resident	61705 Blmtn 9133 Old Sawmill Rd	(C) 309-212-5188 309-662-5617	Suzannruth@msn.com
JOITAN STABE	RESIDENT	61704 43 ABERDEEN WAY	309-662-8908	
James McDermott	Resident	106 Miriam Way	309-242-6047	
Scott Jackson	Resident	1301 Moss Creek Rd	309-530-8434	
Sam Jackson	"	" " " "	" " "	
Fran Kelley	"	911 Spear 61761	" 454-8046	
Ray [unclear]	"		387 7766	
Ronald Warren	RESIDENT	1209 BENTWOOD CT 61761	663-8435	RWARREN@F-W.COM

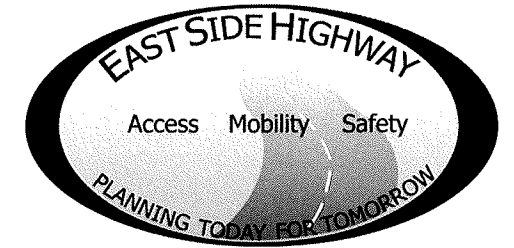


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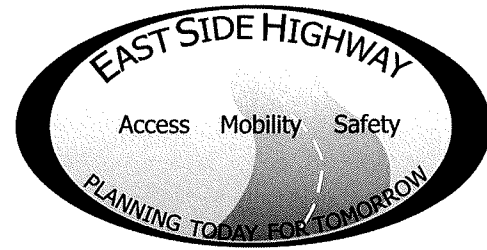
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Marie M. Cuddy	Farm	20523 E. 1500 N. Rd. Normal		
Amisha A. Patel		18 Dry Sage Circle, Blm.		
ASHESH PATEL		18 DRY SAGE CIR, BLM		
Ray Johnson		23 Yukon Cr. Blm		
Bob Dudgeon		11912 Lakewood Dr Blm		
VICTORIA F HARRIS	McLean Co BOARD	1914 Woodfield Rd Bl		
Karen Ament		2994 Benson Ln Normal		
Janet Hanson		20926 E 1300 North Rd Bl		
Luca DeVecchi		1517 Kell Ave Bloomington		
Nicholle DeVecchi		1517 Kell Ave Bloomington		

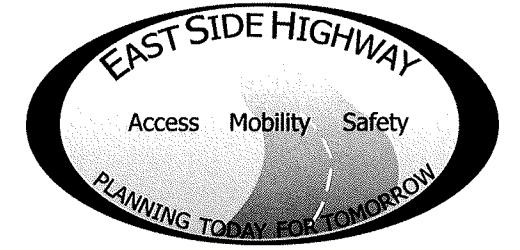


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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Sarah Shaw	resident	2604 Addison Ln	808-0499	SARAHSCY@aol.com
MEI SCHLUETER	"	P.O. Box 218	758 2728	
Brian Shaffer	Resident	9548 Wolf Hill Rd BM 61705	378-2565	BKNLSHAFFER@MSN.COM
Stacy Hoselton	Barb			
Deborah Katchmar	resident	16 Dry Sage Cirde	815-674-3941	dKread1@gmail.com
Deb Engelmeier	resident	1505 Kell Avenue		engel dke @ comcast.net
CHUCK MONTBOMERIE	PRES. ELECT BNAR RESIDENT	8 YORKON CIRCLE	309-275-8706	@luehm @ cbhoa.com
Paula Virlee + Mike Virlee	Resident	2987 Benson Ln Normal	(309)454-6964	muirlee@ymail.com
Jason Timmons	Resident	17 Dry Sage Cir	(309)838-2218	jtinn5@yahoo.com
Mary Kramp	Resident McLean Cty Reg. Plan Com. Bd. Member	903 Durham Dr.	309- 212 ²¹² -6429	kellykramp@yahoo.com



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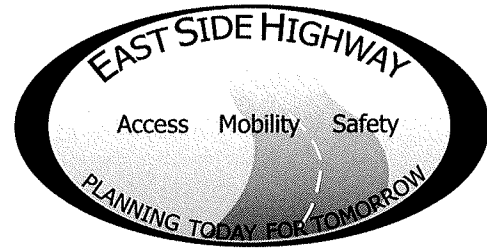
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Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Brian Weibel	Busey Ag Services	3002 W. Windsor Rd Champaign IL 61822	217-351-2744	brian.weibel@busey.com
George Tullier		1406 Watersound Way		gmtullier@aol.com
Janas Burton		22510 E 900 N Rd Downs	309 287 1055	janasburton@mac.com
John Socha		4016 Rockledge Rd Bloomington IL	309 838-8787	jsocha03@gmail.com
Kevin Devine		10691 N. 2150 East Rd, Bloomington		
SUSAN SCHAFER	MCLEAN CO. BOARD	1404 STEEPLECHASE DR, BLM	309-837-2372	susan@schafer9.com
Alan Martell		8383 Idlewood Dr. Blm.	309-378-2700	
Susan Martell		" " " "	" " "	martell1990@hotmail.com
Tim BENJAMIN		21390 E 1200 N Rd. BLM	309-663-2600	
BRIAN MATHIAS		1309 RED ABBEY AVE., BLM	309-533-2241	themathias@gmail.com

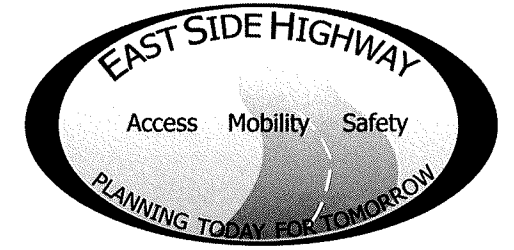


EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

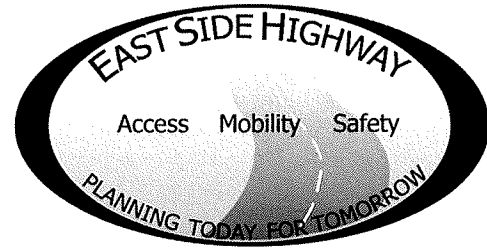
Public Information Meeting No. 5

June 19th, 2013 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Cheryl Campbell		Bl. 61705 5108 Fleming Lane		
Dusty Burton		22510 E 900 N Rd Downs, IL 61736	309-287-4411	
Carrie Craven		4 Kerry Hall Ct Bloomington IL 61705		cjcrave@gmail.com
David Wyse		2203 Riverwoods Lane Bloomington, IL 61705	309 310 7586	drdavid@christmandental.com
BYRON BLAIR		10513 Lyonheart Blm, IL 61705		BB704@aol.com
Andrew Shirk		1305 Longford Lane Blm, IL 61704	309 533 4000	ashirk@beernuts.com
Rebecca Roberts		18367 US Hwy 150 Blm, IL 61705		clrobes@msn.com
RALPH GIBSON		107 EUGENE ST LANPHER TOWNSHIP 61706	309-728-2484	
Erica Roehm		5001 Londonderry Rd Blm, IL 61705	217-840-7804	roehm2009@yahoo.com
Christina Boring		39 DRY Sage Circle Blm, IL 61704	309-275-6436	cboring80@msn.com



EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

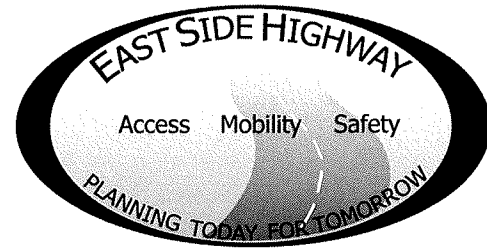
Public Information Meeting No. 5

June 19th, 2013 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Denise Wilson	-	2908 Mockingbird Lane, Bloomington	663-2894	gtwilson2908@msn.com
Wayne A. Williams	-	19036 Brentwood Dr. Bloomington, Ill. 61705	378-4689	
Ron Hodel	Communities @ Weep CARE		309 451 0024	r.hodel@comcast.net
Paul Dehner		3917 Brookline Bloomington 61705		pdehner@yahoo.com
Terry Dunn		3911 Rockledge 61705	309-310-4446	dunnfamily4@comcast.net
Shelly Richard		20341 E 1900N Rd Towanda	309-728-2328	srich@speednet.com
Paul W. Wason	McLean County			
Laurie Bliese		15874 N. 2900 East Rd.	728-2801	
Bill Wason	McLean Co Admin			bill.wason@mcleancountysil.gov
Andrew Walter		4003 Lay Lane Bloomington 61705		

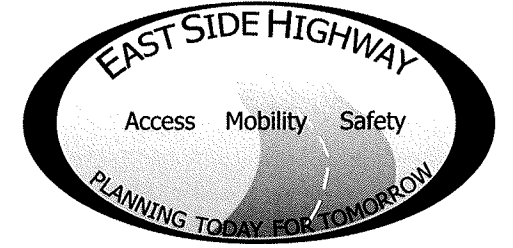


EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Public Information Meeting No. 5

June 19th, 2013 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Normal Community High School



NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Jesm Crumrine		2210 Revere Rd Bloomington IL	531 0529	jicrumr@yahoo.com
Michelle Irvin		3907 Lay Lane Bloomington		mztuvin1231@hotmail.com
DON CAJALLINI	McLean County Board	107 NORTHVIEW DRIVE LEXINGTON, IL 61753	(309) 365-8257	dona.wallace@hotmail.com
LES & DEB SIRON		9512 N 1750 E RD BLOOMINGTON, IL 61705		
KEVIN HOLSTINE		21306 E. 1750 N. Rd Towanda, IL 61776	309.821.3912	kevin.holstine@countryfinancial.com
SARAH HOCK		2884 Shepard Rd Normal IL 61761		
DAVE ASHBROOK		15805 Old Colonial Rd Blm 61705-5976		
Susan Jackson	Land owner	3012 Ann Dr Bloomington	662-7579	
Lindsey & Michael Wilkerson		9 Chinkapin Ct. Bloomington		
Judy Glenn	Realtor	2401 E. Empire Blm 61704	261-7333	



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

To whom it may concern,

My name is _____ and I currently live in the Harvest Point subdivision _____. I understand I am passed the deadline for submitting official feedback for the proposed East side highway planning that is currently underway. Unfortunately due to a family crisis over the past few months I have been out of the loop as to the latest information surrounding this issue. However, I feel it is important to share and submit my feedback regardless of this fact, as this proposal has a significant impact on my family, as well as our home and lifestyle.

I understand the planning has narrowed the alternatives down to two options, 126, and 127, with 126 being the preferred route. This creates two obvious and serious concerns for my family.

In order to route highway 126 around town, you would be required to take an invasive approach into my neighborhood. As the route is laid out, one third and possibly even up to half of the harvest point subdivision would have to be demolished and paved over, uprooting the lives of many families in the process. It so happens that my home likely sits on the edge of how far into the neighborhood you would be required to level. This unfortunately leaves me with two miserable options: 1) live within 100 yards of an active and loud highway, or 2) watch my home and land be taken from me and demolished. As you can imagine, neither option can be viewed as acceptable to an existing home owner, but in fact it gets worse. If by chance my house is outside of the land area required to build the highway, my home value will drop significantly due to its proximity to the new interstate, effectively taking hard earned money and equity out of my home. As a result, even if my house was spared destruction I likely wouldn't be able to sell it and relocate due to the resulting market crash within the neighborhood. To take a step further, this routing could realistically kill the subdivision as a whole. I imagine route 126 was first developed prior to the Harvest Point subdivision's existence, but I strongly feel this alternative should no longer be considered due to the now flourishing Harvest Point neighborhood. In the past 5 months alone, over 15 new homes have begun development, with potentially half of them within the proposed

footprint of this highway. Alternative route 127, while still not ideal, would be much less damaging to established families.

As mentioned above, it's possible my home could be taken from me to allow development of alternative route 126. If that is necessary under eminent domain law, fair and just compensation becomes a serious concern. I've heard from other neighbors that "fair" compensation for our properties would be set at 80% "fair market value." If that is true, how you can even consider taking someone's land under the presumption that it's for the better good of the community and not even offer them the full value of the land is unconscionable. I would urge you to consider your own feelings if a government official came to your door and told you they were taking your land, and giving you only 80% of its value. If this comes to fruition, you are effectively decreasing the quality of life for those affected by 20%. That is not an emotion, it is not an overreaction, it is a scientifically measured result. If my home is worth \$250,000 today and you give me 80% value and make me move so you can build a highway, I am now in a position to only move to a \$200,000 home. You have effectively cut my quality of life and my net worth by 20% so that drivers can save 10 minutes of time not looping around the South-east end of town. In addition, this affects many other areas of my life including where in town I may be able to live, access to different areas of town, access to my work, and most importantly, where my kids go to school. Again, it is completely and wholly unconscionable to place this strain on families when another alternative is just a half mile down the road. Additionally, I have concerns with who and how "fair market value" is determined. If the decision is made in 2014 to build route 126, even if not for another 15 years, our home values will immediately and significantly drop. If "fair market value" is then determined down the road we will never see a fair return on our homes. "Fair market value" at a minimum must be determined by the peak of the value prior to the determination of the highway route.

I have reviewed the presentation material provided during the public information meeting held on June 19th, and I find slide 12 very interesting. The slide, titled "Initial Screening Alternative" asks, "**does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community?**" I find the irrefutable answer to this question in regards to Harvest Point is obvious - Yes, it does! It would significantly alter the design and flow of our neighborhood, it would result in the demolition of roughly 20 homes, it would significantly reduce home values, and it would significantly reduce the quality of life for every family within the neighborhood. This question would also apply to the Grove subdivision on Ireland Grove Rd in that Yes; it would isolate that neighborhood and community outside the city as established by the surrounding interstates.

I sincerely ask you to look within your hearts and think about this through the eyes of an established family, as a human being, and not through the eyes of a business looking to score the next big development contract (money). Surely, not one of you would consider this option viable if you owned a home within Harvest Point. I again urge you to consider how you would feel if someone came knocking on your door tomorrow informing you that half of your neighbors' homes would soon be demolished to put in a new highway? I image your feelings would echo those of this letter writer. While I would prefer that the Eastside highway project be scrapped indefinitely as I don't see its current or future need, if it is determined that this project must move forward, I implore you to consider alternative route 127 as it would have a far less measureable impact on existing communities.

Thank you for your consideration

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Procedures for land acquisition will follow the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Land Acquisition Procedures Manual. The policies detail when compensation to properties with proximity impacts is appropriate. Most land acquisition activities will occur during Phase II design, after the EA and Phase I Engineering have been completed.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community (Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)." Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual. Subdivisions near the ESH, including Harvest Pointe, do meet the definition of a neighborhood; however the remaining alternatives do not divide the neighborhood into two sections or isolate the neighborhood from community services. The remaining ESH alignments are all located on the east side of Harvest Pointe, and none of these alternatives are located between Harvest Pointe and Bloomington. Additionally, residents of the Grove will still have access to community services via Ireland Grove Road. Emergency response personnel for Bloomington- Normal have indicated that the ESH will help reduce emergency response times on the east side.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH EA is being conducted through the joint efforts of McLean County and the communities of Bloomington and Normal (in coordination with IDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)), who recognize the need for additional future transportation capacity on the east and southeast sides of the communities to accommodate forecasted growth. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The project team has not had and continues to have no involvement with developers. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side, which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and travel time savings for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and

subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, the FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer
August 23, 2013



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Dear

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Dear Clark Dietz,

We like option 3, none of the above.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,

Eric S. Schmitt, BE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Here are my comments about the June 6, 2013 meeting on the East Side Highway.

Alternative 126 has several problems as compared to Alt 127:

- *.71 acres of wet land is substantial vs. .01 for Alt 127:*
- *7 Businesses are affected vs. none for Alt 127*
- *35 utilities are affected vs. 5 for Alt 127*
- *15 more noise receptors than Alt 127*
- *4 more farm residences affected than Alt 127*
- *12 more farm buildings affected than Alt 127*

So it appears Alt 127 has a clear advantage until AG parcel separation is considered.

Problems with Alt 127 include:

- *2 more diagonal severance tracts*
- *13 more acres in severance management zones*
- *More adverse miles traveled*
- *2 more farms otherwise affected*
- *2 more uneconomical remnants*
- *19 more acres in land locked parcels*
- *2 more acres of highly erodible acres affected*

If these negative consequences to farm operators and land owners are equitably compensated for, the additional cost for these items will add considerably to the construction cost for this project.

It appears that shifting the I-74 connection point further east would make the southern leg of the route a more directly north and south route that would reduce many of the above listed negative affects to ag land parcels and theirs relocated costs.

In addition, this shift of the I-74 connection point further east would lessen the sharp turn shown on the current plan at the Cheney's Grove Road interchange, which you have stated is problem in building a safe highway.

This leads to the conclusion that the best route is Alternative 127 that includes shifting the I-74 connection point further east from the planned point of entry.

Respectfully submitted

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

Several connections to I-74 were evaluated during the alternatives analysis process. The location of the current I-74 interchange was developed with input from the Community Working Group (CWG) and Land Use and Access Management Focus Working Group (FWG) to minimize diagonal farm severances. The interchange type was refined from a cloverleaf to a trumpet interchange to reduce the footprint size. Additionally, the CWG, FWG, and Project Study Group (PSG) recommended the I-74 cloverleaf interchange be reduced to a trumpet interchange because the need to continue the ESH south of I-74 was minimal, and Bloomington's 2035 Land Use Plan did not indicate that the area south of I-74 was a future growth area for the city. Further options to the east were eliminated as they resulted in higher environmental, residential, or agricultural impacts, or they were not as feasible as other alternatives based on engineering considerations (skewed angles). The current location of the I-74 connection reduces cumulative agricultural and environmental impacts. A memo was developed that summarizes the impacts associated with each interchange location at I-74 and can be made available to you upon request.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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October 4, 2013

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I would like to express my concern regarding the east side highway project. I support neither option 126 or 127. Some reasons for my objection to this project include the following: 1) the project is supposed to relieve traffic congestion in Bloomington-Normal; however, one will have to drive miles away from the city to reach the highway. 2) The highway combines multiple exits with an interstate. The number of exits is something one would normally see in a major metropolitan area. Bloomington-Normal is not that large of a city and does not need that many access points on an interstate. 3) Building this road would ruin many acres of prime farmland. 4) The building of this highway will increase noise pollution with the increased interstate traffic. 5) The building of this highway is based on increased population growth in the area which may or may not occur. 6) I personally believe the building of this highway will decrease personal property values in the area.

Bloomington-Normal is a lovely community and it is my home. One of the reasons I chose to locate my family in the area is the small town charm of the city. I am for progress and planning for the future, but I do not see one positive impact of this project. I can in no way support this project; therefore, I choose the NO BUILD option.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project

website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH also will relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option.

Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following IDOT's freeway interchange spacing standards. The location of interchanges was based on traffic volumes and input from the Community Working Groups (CWG) and Project Study Group (PSG).

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary

depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Dear

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

An alternative route from Rte. 55 to RTE 74 could be the Lexington blacktop, thus not disturbing much more our precious farm land. PLEASE RESPOND

Response:

An improvement between Lexington to Leroy was assessed early in the ESH planning process. Lexington-Leroy Road is a north-south route located approximately ten miles east of Bloomington-Normal and approximately five miles east of the eastern boundary of the urban development boundaries of the area's 2035 Land Use Plan. Based on the analysis of similar alternatives in the 2009 ESH Corridor Report, a Lexington-Leroy Road alternative would not adequately improve access to or mobility on the major roads in the study area and would not accommodate forecasted growth on the east side due to its distance from the eastern edge of the forecasted growth area. Therefore, an improved Lexington-Leroy Road could not meet the Purpose & Need of the project, and it was eliminated from further consideration.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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We are against this. My question if this is a long term option why are you following Towanda Barnes -by like 1 1/2 miles horizontally to Towanda is - and it's a 4 lane road-- and your not taking this past downs on route 150 on the east side of downs to connect to 74 where no homes are. If this is a bypass why not take it far past these subdivisions? I live out here. I travel Towanda Barnes every day. At all times, the only time it's full is when people go to work and go home. During the day it's not used a lot. We could not make it to this meeting because of our work hours but this is a waste of our money. And I think it's a shame that this road will follow Towanda Barnes to benefit a few businesses. It will uproot family farms. Destroy homes. And our wildlife. I've lived here 14 years and in no way is this road needed. If it is--- take it between Leroy and downs. Then you could call it a bypass. 174 is right there. There's more behind this than helping the flow of traffic. I'd like to hear the truth. Your an environmental study?? What about traffic noise-- wildlife destroyed. Farm ground destroyed. Lives destroyed. Where is the truth? Where is the morality and where human life and character means something. You have upset a lot of people. Congratulations.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the

Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The ESH EA is being conducted through the joint efforts of McLean County and the communities of Bloomington and Normal (in coordination with IDOT and the FHWA), who recognize the need for additional future transportation capacity on the east and southeast sides of the communities to accommodate forecasted growth. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The project team has not had and continues to have no involvement with developers.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side, which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and travel time savings for both

local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the EA consider many potential impacts of an alternative, such as traffic noise, community impacts, wetlands, water quality, threatened and endangered species, visual impacts, agricultural impacts, and changes in air quality. Per NEPA, environmental impacts should be avoided or minimized when feasible. NEPA does not require an agency to select the environmentally preferable alternative or prohibit adverse environmental effects. Agencies may have other policy considerations to take into account in the decision-making process, such as social, economic, or technical interests. NEPA does require that an agency be informed of the environmental consequences of their decision.

The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced by an ESH was assessed during the alternatives analysis process. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high number of displacements were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), remain criteria of comparison throughout the EA. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the EA, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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What a typical waste by the state.

Just connect Towanda/Barnes to 74 and 55 and call it good.

Add a lane in each direction.

If there is really a need for that growth, let the people that will develop the area pay for the roads in the future.

Response:

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The ESH EA is being conducted through the joint efforts of McLean County and the communities of Bloomington and Normal, who recognize the need for additional future transportation capacity on the east and southeast sides of the communities to accommodate forecasted growth. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. It is more prudent to identify the best location of an ESH before the development occurs. Waiting for the development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in substantially greater impacts to homes and businesses.

Financing of future road construction on the east side of Bloomington-Normal depends on many factors; roadway financing begins with recognition of who has jurisdiction over the roadway. The majority of roads that are planned for the east side of Bloomington-Normal will be under local jurisdiction (either Bloomington or Normal, depending on the location of the roadway). Local governments have several ways to finance roadway construction, such as bonds, loans, user-based methods such as impact fees, or partnerships with state and Federal agencies. Larger roadway facilities, such as the ESH, are typically funded by state or Federal agencies due to the amount of financing required.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Hi, my name is My wife and I live in Normal. In 2010, we traveled through Dothan, Alabama.

On the way south we went through the center of town. On the way back north we saw a sign that said "bypass."

We decided to take the bypass and save some time. Well, we did not save any time. Let me draw you a picture of this "bypass." There's this road and then there are landowners along this road. One land owner builds a hotel, one builds a restaurant, and one builds an oil change place and etc. and etc. and etc.

All of these businesses need access from the "bypass." Then there are stoplights and traffic. It was a mess. I'll never go that way again.

To me this plan is too close to Towanda Barnes. Not to mention farmland and subdivisions.

Thank you

Response:

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will

improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The recommended facility type is a freeway, full-access controlled facility; commercial driveways and stop lights are not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

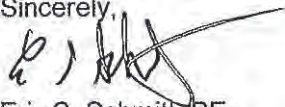
The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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To whom it may concern,

I would like to comment on opposing this plan, especially the 126 plan. My wife and I just build a home right on the end of Harvest Pointe where this highway is planned to go. We had chosen this location b/c it was an up and coming neighborhood but still quiet and peaceful. Since we moved in (December of 2012) the neighborhood has seemed to double in size in this short time. This highway would be a HUGE hit to the area's way of life, property values, and the list goes on. My wife and I recently got married, built our dream home, and just had our first child in April, please consider what I am saying and how this would truly effect many people who are just starting out, growing their families, and planting roots in Bloomington Normal.

Thanks

Response:

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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To whom it may concern:

I want to submit comments in opposition of plan 126 for the Eastside Highway to be constructed. We are building a home right in the path of this highway as we speak and this highway would be a significant detriment to our property values and overall quality of living. We may in fact, be forced out of our home given the map. Please consider our comments and do not allow this to happen. Our neighborhood, Harvest Pointe has recently taken off and the reason we chose this neighborhood was because of how quiet and quaint it was. Please do not take this away from us, and consider option 127 instead.

Thank you.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA. In order to determine if a specific property is affected, please refer to the interactive map under the "Map" tab on the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com). The remaining alternatives are displayed on an aerial map. You can zoom in to the specific property in question. If you do not have access to the internet, the project team can mail you a map of the area in question if you identify the parcel identification number (PIN) of the property. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the Public Hearing, which will tentatively be held in early 2014. Procedures for land acquisition will follow the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Land Acquisition Procedures Manual. The policies detail when compensation to properties with proximity impacts is appropriate. Most land acquisition activities will occur during Phase II design, after the EA and Phase I Engineering have been completed.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I am sorry this is not needed.

This project is going to be a waste of money and good farmland.

Response:

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located

further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing.

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For several years, I've been researching the early (19th century) and mostly unknown history of the Walker Family (as in, Presidents Bush). George E. & Harriet (Mercer) Walker, then their son Edward (Ned) Walker, had a small farm (about 64 acres) in Blooming Grove from late 1838 on into the last quarter-century of the 1800s.

From old plat maps I've determined that this was the approximate location of that farm:

About 4 miles southeast of Bloomington at Section 26, Township 23N, Range 2E. Bordering the right triangle-shaped parcel were properties owned by various members of the Orendorff family..."

The south border of the site edges Old Colonial Road (County Highway 30), east off U.S. 51 South. Current-day maps suggest this farm may have been, approximately, at the intersection of today's east-west Old Colonial Road and Capodice Road.

I would appreciate knowing if either of the proposed east side highway routes takes in or in some way impacts this property.

FYI, George E. Harriet (Mercer) Walker were gr-gr-etc.-grandparents of the Presidents Bush. Also, they were the uncle and aunt of Bloomington's Judge David Davis.

Response:

In order to determine if a specific property is affected, please refer to the interactive map under the "Map" tab on the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com). The remaining alternatives are displayed on an aerial map. You can zoom in to the specific property in question. If you do not have access to the internet, the project team can mail you a map of the area in question if you identify the parcel identification number (PIN) of the property. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the Public Hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.



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Please do not post my name or contact information for public view. I am not in favor of building the East Side Highway. I don't believe the highway will be used to alleviate congestion within Bloomington Normal. It does not make sense for people traveling in town - other roads will be used. If I had to choose between the options, I would select proposal 127 because it is the farthest away from the Eagle View subdivision. Proposal 126 is far too close to Eagle View, the newly approved park, and the proposed school. Were the park and school taken into consideration when selecting the option? I do not believe that a highway should be so close to this child focused areas.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, you preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH also will relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer

valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The ESH is being designed per IDOT and FHWA safety standards. There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a school or park must be distanced from a freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the EA. The EA will include the evaluation of all existing schools and parks as well as schools and parks that have been incorporated into area comprehensive plans. The EA cannot take into account structures that are not officially planned.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Please do not post my Name or contact information for public view. I am not in favor of building the East Side Highway. I believe the growth numbers cited at the last public meeting are inflated and represent a temporary blip caused by a large influx of temporary contractors that will not remain in the area long term. If I had to choose between the options, I would select proposal 127 because it is the furthest away from the Eagle View subdivision. Proposal 126 is far too close to Eagle View and the new park. It will create noise and make empty lots difficult to sell. This will then impact all properties within the neighborhood.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent

of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

The ESH is being designed per IDOT and FHWA safety standards. There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered for parks and other resources in the EA.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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My comments will be simple. Illinois currently has the worst investor rating of any state in the US. The US is 17,000,000,000,000 in debt. Like any responsible person, gov't needs to become likewise. If a person had these financial situations they would NOT be able to get a loan from a bank. If a bank had a balance sheet like this they would be forced to close by the gov't. It is time for people like me to stand up and tell the gov't this discussion is closed. The gov't can't afford it and we the people are unwilling to be taxed more so you can get.

I used to live in Indiana and they wanted to build a similar road north of Indianapolis, but reality set in...they couldn't afford it. So they didn't do it. Would have been nice but Indiana showed some responsibility. Maybe that is why Indiana continues to grow in getting new businesses and NOT being broke!!!

*This eastside thing is something that would be new but is not needed....period.
When young my parents used to say, "Everything doesn't have to be new, take care of what you have got". Gov't would do well to remember this, especially when it comes to the roads in Illinois.*

Response:

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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McLean County Engineer



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About the east side bypass, I have a question: Why? There's already a bypass called Towanda-Barnes Road. Allow for further expansion to the east? Hardly, since the (proposed limited access) bypass would completely sever any future development to the east of it. Provide access to businesses? Again, there's already T-B Road, which provides excellent access, is easy to use (I travel on it twice a day at its "rush hour" with no difficulty whatsoever) and, most importantly, is already there! Give east side access to Chicago via I-55? That's called I-74 to I-57. Give east side access to I-74? Broken record, but that's called T-B Road. Finally, if an unnecessary bypass must be built, it should truly meet the arguments being given for one (expansion, access, etc.) by building it from Lexington to Leroy – that would be a real bypass, not just Veterans Parkway 2.0. (And this doesn't even begin to address where the money will come from, the environmental impact, and the destruction of farmland, homes, and lives that are the inevitable byproducts of this bypass.) PLEASE do not proceed with this! And stop spending money on plans to justify the unjustifiable!

Response:

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and

subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

There is a tendency to assume that because there is an Interstate roadway on the west side of Bloomington-Normal (I-55/I-74), and because the west side of the cities has developed slower than the east side, the Interstate highway was the direct cause of the slower growth. The primary cause of slower urban growth on the west side of Bloomington-Normal is the lack of sanitary sewer infrastructure. Much of the west side is downstream of the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District (BNWRD) sewage treatment plant on West Oakland Avenue. For this reason, pumping stations would be required to transport sewage. Additionally, the presence of Sugar Creek (and its tributaries) and railroad properties further stalled west side development. The I-55/I-74 corridor has few interchanges on the west side, and therefore has less east-west connectivity and access to west side land, which is a factor in the area's slower growth, but the Interstate highway is not the primary cause of the slow growth.

The developed land on the east side of Bloomington-Normal lies within the service area of the West Oakland Avenue treatment plant. The undeveloped land on the east side of the cities is predominantly in the watershed of Kickapoo Creek and may be served by gravity to the BNWRD sewage treatment plant in Randolph Township, making development more feasible.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

An improvement between Lexington to Leroy was assessed early in the ESH planning process. Lexington-Leroy Road is a north-south route located approximately ten miles east of Bloomington-Normal and approximately five miles east of the eastern boundary of the urban development boundaries of the area's 2035 Land Use Plan. Based on the analysis of similar alternatives in the 2009 ESH Corridor Report, a Lexington-Leroy Road alternative would not adequately improve access to or mobility on the major roads in the study area and would not accommodate forecasted growth on the east side due to its distance from the eastern edge of the forecasted growth area. Therefore, an improved Lexington-Leroy Road could not meet the Purpose & Need of the project, and it was eliminated from further consideration.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many potential impacts of an alternative, such as traffic noise, community impacts, residential impacts, wetlands, water quality, threatened and endangered species, visual impacts, agricultural impacts, and changes in air quality. Per NEPA, environmental impacts should be avoided or minimized when feasible. NEPA does not require an agency to select the environmentally preferable alternative or prohibit adverse environmental effects. Agencies may have other policy considerations to take into account in the decision-making process, such as social, economic, or technical interests. NEPA does require that an agency be informed of the environmental consequences of their decision.

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

As a resident of Harvest Point subdivision, it has come to my attention that the East Side Highway expansion will negatively impact my neighborhood. Though both alternatives would disrupt our safety and peace it appears #126 would actually require destruction of a few existing homes. Our neighborhood is just now beginning to grow so with this expansion our future looks bleak. Home values will significantly drop. If building cannot be avoided alternative 127 would be the lesser of 2 evils.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project, and the priority of the FHWA, IDOT, and McLean County. A detailed safety evaluation of the Preferred Alternative will be included in the EA document. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility considered for the ESH, a full access control freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools, residential areas, and parks will be evaluated in the EA. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 4, 2013

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To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to submit comments in opposition of Plan 126 for Eastside Highway to be constructed. We have been living in Harvest Pointe subdivision for the past four years. My wife and I bought this home right after our wedding, and wanted to raise our family in it. This was our first home. We welcomed our first child in this home. If Plan 126 passes, the whole neighborhood will take a severely negative hit in every aspect imaginable including financial, environmental, and social. Even though you may have done a diligent analysis/comparison between plan 126 and plan 127, the social and human costs involved in plan 126 as opposed to plan 127 are much higher, and should not be overlooked.

Due to the great recession, our housing value took a nose dive right after we bought it. But we stuck to it, and did everything we could to keep this a desirable neighborhood for people from all walks of life. We love this quiet, quaint, and friendly neighborhood just as much we love all our neighbors that live here. Please do not take those away from us.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your opposition for Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced by an ESH was assessed during the alternatives analysis process. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high number of displacements were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), remain criteria of comparison throughout the EA. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the EA, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 4, 2013

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The most eastern Rte. would run if I am correct right behind several subdivisions. So what happens when a car loses control and ends up in backyard where kids are playing. If I am reading this correctly the eastern Rte. would displace 18 residents and 7 business and the more eastern Rte. would displace 13 residents and no businesses. With that information there should not even be two options; eastern route should be the only option. We need to think about what area is growing right now. It isn't the area with exits to highways or interstates. It's the quit area of Bloomington Normal. North and east end. This is a horrible idea. Look at where our exits are now. I would say those areas are less than desirable. So lets take the nicest part of town and do the same thing. Every nice subdivision that is going up right now will be effected. Horrible idea all the way around.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 (easternmost alternative) over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

There is a tendency to assume that because there is an Interstate roadway on the west side of Bloomington-Normal (I-55/I-74), and because the west side of the cities has developed slower than the east side, the Interstate highway is the direct cause of the slower growth. The primary cause of slower urban growth on the west side of Bloomington-Normal is the lack of sanitary sewer infrastructure. Much of the west side is downstream of the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District (BNWRD) sewage treatment plant on West Oakland Avenue. For this reason, pumping stations would be required to transport sewage. Additionally, the presence of Sugar Creek (and its tributaries) and railroad properties further stall west side development. The I-55/I-74 corridor has few interchanges on the west side, and therefore has less east-west connectivity and access to west side land, which is a factor in the area's slower growth, but the Interstate highway is not the primary cause of the slow growth.

The developed land on the east side of Bloomington-Normal lies within the service area of the West Oakland Avenue treatment plant. The undeveloped land on the east side of the cities is predominantly in the watershed of Kickapoo Creek and may be served by gravity to the BNWRD sewage treatment plant in Randolph Township, making development more feasible and less expensive.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I attended the most recent Public Information Session and I am continually disturbed by the information being presented and the attitudes of Clark Dietz in regards to the highway. Based on the conversations I've had with other citizens, which includes those who live by the proposed routes and those who don't, I have not found a single person who is in favor of the highway. The biggest questions everyone asks are very simple – "why" and "who". In all the sessions I've attended and all the articles I've read, I don't know that I really know the answer myself. Yes, Bloomington-Normal is expanding east, but placing an eastside highway in that area will be of limited use to 95+% of the city – the part that sits to the west of the proposed routes, and will likely use Towanda-Barnes or other north/south roads for their travels. Assuming drivers will drive out of their way to go to the highway for the faster speeds sounds good in theory, but is flawed once drivers realize the number of stop lights they will have to go through to get to the eastside highway and off of it (namely, having to cross Towanda-Barnes to get to it, only having to cross back over Towanda-Barnes when they need to get off). This point was brought up to Clark Dietz representatives I spoke to, but they repeatedly brushed it aside and couldn't understand why anyone wouldn't use that highway.

There is also much discontent between the city and Clark Dietz because they are doing a job, which they are likely receiving a large sum from, whereas the residents of Bloomington Normal have a deep understanding of the city. The statistics used in the presentations are used to make their point, but doesn't tell the full story – a story that can be understood by just understanding the city.

It is not fair to compare unemployment statistics of Bloomington Normal to areas such as Chicago. Very few people come to Bloomington Normal to find a job, as they would in larger cities. The opportunities for available jobs in BN is so much smaller than what is available in Chicago. Individuals and families will typically come to our area for only a couple of things – education and State Farm.

State Farm is such a major force within Bloomington Normal that I have concerns this study did not include them in their growth estimates. There has been a lot of information about State Farm's employee growth in not just the Pantagraph, our local newspaper, but at other locations where State Farm has buildings, as well. State Farm has a plan for their growth because they cannot become bigger in Bloomington-Normal than what their buildings can hold. If information from State Farm was not included, I would call the growth estimates seriously flawed. And, even if State Farm information was used, if it was not information from the past month, the study is still flawed, as information coming out of State Farm, as it relates to growth, has changed. The city is currently busting at the seams for all infrastructure, due to a major effort taking place within State Farm. State Farm has repeatedly said not to build more schools or apartment buildings to hold these new employees, as the growth is only for a short duration, and will subside in the next few years.

I also have concerns about the cost of this effort. It is routinely quoted at being between \$200-300 million dollars, although a start date has not been determined. Speaking as an American and an Illinois citizen, I am very concerned about spending that much money for 12 miles worth of highway. I do not see the return on investment of this money, especially if the costs go up due to unforeseen issues or delayed starts. Our economy, both for the State of Illinois and our country, is in dire straits. Spending this much money, to me, seems to be a fiscal mistake. The State of Illinois is cutting teachers and after school activities to fund other parts of the state, and I cannot support a multiple hundred million dollar work effort, when those funds could be put to better use and get a better ROI.

Finally, I must state my concerns with the Public Information Sessions, in general, since they are now complete. The information sessions were just that – sessions to provide information on the work being done, progress being made, and lack of concern based on prior comments from the audience. Clark Dietz says they welcome comments and questions, but the comments are never addressed in a public form, just a link on their website with response that were provided. Responses to these letters on the website and responses to questions asked at the Public Information Sessions was pretty much the same – a canned answer and/or script had to be provided without really answering any questions or providing more insight. I witnessed people ask the same questions many different ways and only received the same canned response each time. They eventually gave up because they realized it was pointless to argue any of their points with the representatives that were there. It ultimately saddens me that attendance seemed to be lower for the last information session than the prior ones, because many members in this community feel defeated. They've made their points in the newspapers, to Clark Dietz, to their city and county representatives...and the comments appear to fall on deaf ears. For a company to state they are working with the people and having special interest groups to make sure their opinion is heard, the lack of regard for our questions and concerns is very disturbing. What many want to see is a public forum, not an information session, where all interested parties can bring up their questions to a panel and have them addressed publically. These types of forums are held by the city, by school districts, but it's not being done for this. If Clark Dietz truly believes in the work they are doing, I don't understand why they try to hide behind canned answers which are routinely provided.

If it's not clear from this letter, I am in favor of the "no build" option.

PS – I don't like the fact that Clark Dietz states there were 129 alternatives that were studied. While technically correct, it is based on all the combinations of on/off ramps to the highways and the primary 12 mile stretch of the highway. How difficult is it to mention the 129 alternatives consist of X on/off ramps and Y 12-mile stretches of highway, which would provide better visibility into what was really being looked at.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public

comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The ESH EA is being conducted through the joint efforts of McLean County and the communities of Bloomington and Normal (in coordination with IDOT and FHWA), who recognize the need for additional future transportation capacity on the east and southeast sides of the communities to accommodate forecasted growth. The project team has not had and continues to have no involvement with developers.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

The staff members present at the PIM all had access to the same technical information regarding the project, so their answers were very similar based upon the facts of the project. Regarding written response letters, in projects of this size, comments that repeat the same basic message are typically responded to collectively. However, for the ESH project, the project team responds to each comment received within the public comment period individually. Every comment received during the course of the project is read, considered, and is presented to the Federal and State resource agencies before a decision is made. Every comment that is received within the public comment period is answered individually and the comments are posted to the project website so that other stakeholders can access the response letters. A Public Hearing is tentatively planned to be held in the second quarter of 2014.

The preliminary alternatives were combinations of 18 northern, five middle, and 18 southern sections. The sections were combined to create a total of 129 Build Alternative combinations. The sections did not differ by on/off ramp location or interchange type since interchange configurations were not developed at that time; each section was unique and in different geographic locations. Maps depicting these 129 Build Alternatives can be found on the website.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Schmitt', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 04, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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Hi guys – as a resident of the east side of Bloomington, and one who travels I-74 most week days I love the two remaining alternatives currently under consideration. Very exciting.


Response:

Thank you for your support of the ESH project. Please continue to attend the Public Information Meetings and submit feedback throughout the remainder of the project.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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I wish to register my opposition to both of the proposed "option" for a new east-side bypass. I don't think such a road is needed, will not benefit any local residents, will destroy excellent farmland which cannot be restored, and will force homeowners off their own property, which is an outrage!

*We don't need it.
We don't want it.
We can't afford it.
Don't do it!*

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and improved mobility for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced by an ESH was assessed during the alternatives analysis process. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high number of displacements were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), remain criteria of comparison throughout the EA. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the EA, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Based on the number of Business Displacements and Resident Displacements - Alternative #127 is the best alternative for the local businesses and residents.

Additional concerns with the age of the data used to project the need for an East Side Highway. Is the 11 year old data still relevant? Because of the changes with the economy and other factors...Is this highway project still a priority?

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status

of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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When will this highway be built?

Response:

At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) are not yet funded. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for construction has not been determined. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds are available, and some funding may come from the County or cities.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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You can not run a highway so close to already established subdivisions. What happens to the semis that run off the road into someone's back yard. If you are going to put this road in it has to be the most eastern one.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 (easternmost alternative) over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project, and the priority of the FHWA, IDOT, and McLean County. A detailed safety evaluation of the Preferred Alternative will be included in the EA document. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility considered for the ESH, a full access control freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools, residential areas, and parks will be evaluated in the EA. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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I attended your recent meeting and have been following your gradual consideration for the interstate. I want to start by stating that my family and I are fully against this highway. We have recently purchased a lot and we are in the process of building our dream home. This "more expensive" location was chosen over others because of the quiet, family orientated neighborhood. This highway will not only take this away, but will make our "once in a lifetime investment" a waste of time and money. I understand that you are going to put up "noise mitigation walls" and will try to make it as discreet as possible. Let's be honest, those noise mitigation walls are useless and the sound will still be heard, especially when you are a half-mile away. You can say anything that you want to make the public believe that the sound won't hurt the value of their homes...but this is an outright lie. Do all the studies you want on how the highway will not have a negative affect on home values. These studies are not walking through with potential homebuyers that see/hear the highway and choose to go somewhere else because of the eyesore.

Do we really need this highway right now? Every response that I have read in the past that deals with your studies miscalculation on population has never been answered. The projections were off by almost 20,000 people, and you want to try and tell the public that you now have an accurate estimation of the population in 2035? Sounds like the only people that are going to benefit from this highway are the ones that are the engineers/developers/contractors of this project. You guys are so money hungry that you are throwing away the publics best interest to benefit yourselves.

You say that this will not be a bypass but would rather help north/south traffic. This is another outright lie. If this proposal is not a bypass, then why would it be connected to 55 and 74? If mobility around the eastside is such a problem, why wouldn't we expand Towanda Barnes to 3 lanes now for less money and it would better suit our current/future population. If the population projections were off by 20,000 people now, how off will the projection be in 2035?

This is a terrible idea. I understand that you are concerned with future population projections, but these projections are not accurate. Using them as an emphasis for your proposal is a disservice to our community and is shameful how you disregard the community's lack of interest in the continuation of this project. Please stop wasting our time and money on a project that nobody wants.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

Noise barriers are considered as abatement measures for areas found to have traffic noise impacts from a proposed road. Noise barriers reduce the sound from a roadway by absorbing the sound, transmitting it, reflecting it back across the roadway, or forcing it to take a longer path over and around the barrier. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of roadway. A detailed noise assessment will determine the appropriate location and height of noise walls, if noise impacts from the ESH are identified. A noise barrier must be tall enough and long enough to block the view (or line of sight) of a roadway from the area that is to be protected, the "receiver." The area behind a noise barrier that is most effective at noise reduction is called a "shadow zone." The shadow zone is typically within 200 feet of a noise barrier, depending upon roadway and ground topography, as well as the location of noise receptors.

Noise barriers do not eliminate traffic noise, but instead reduce noise levels to where a number of receptors can be considered "benefitted" by the barrier. Per IDOT noise policy, receptors that experience a noise reduction of 5 dB(A) from a barrier are considered benefitted. This means that road noise can still be heard behind a barrier, but the noise level is reduced.

Visual impacts will be assessed in the EA document and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) composed of local citizens was formed and landscaping and aesthetics were discussed with the group.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole

Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

The ESH EA is being conducted through the joint efforts of McLean County and the communities of Bloomington and Normal (in coordination with IDOT and FHWA), who recognize the need for additional future transportation capacity on the east and southeast sides of the communities to accommodate forecasted growth. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The project team has not had and continues to have no involvement with developers.

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs. The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief in the Bloomington-Normal area is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side, which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and travel time savings for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

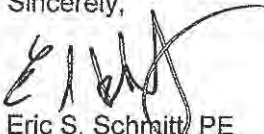
The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public information Meeting 5

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Is the east side highway a "NEED".. Or a "Nice to have"? From what I see, it is expensive, it will be a burden to tax payers for years to come, and will not fulfill the needs for "LOCAL" traffic any better than what is currently in place, i.e. Towanda/Barnes. The Pantagraph had an estimate of 200 to 300 million to build. But what is missing, is the on going maintenance cost. What is the projected maintenance costs for 9 to 11 bridges and over passes? What are the costs for lighting? What are the costs for road repairs? Illinois is behind in bridge maintenance now, how can we afford more bridges? And, how did the proposal include a bike path? How does a bike path fit in for a need? Versus "nice to have"? My conclusion, this proposed road is not needed, and tax payers certainly don't need to be saddled with a bike path.

Stop spending tax payer's dollars for "nice to have" projects.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

As part of the development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. Existing and planned bicycle accommodations were inventoried. The proposed multi-use path and ESH crossings are compatible with and complement the existing trail system and will support the planned future land uses in the ESH area. The multi-use path was developed with input from the Alternative Modes Focus Working Group (FWG), composed of local citizens.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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My preferred option is neither of the above. We have enough roads--what we need is some innovative thinking to get people using less fossil fuel and doing business more efficiently so they don't have to toot around so much.

Let the businesses in town prosper from interstate traffic rather than trying to divert it away from existing services and businesses.

Don't build the East Side Highway. Please.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing interstate system. A detailed traffic model using existing traffic data and traffic patterns has been developed to ensure that the Preferred Alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will significantly divert traffic from the existing west side Interstate system or draw significant numbers of potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement to infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts (increased use of fossil fuels, safety issues) that it brings. As part of the roadway development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. A multi-use bicycle and pedestrian path is being proposed as part of the ESH project. The path is proposed adjacent to the ESH facility.

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I live in the Eagle View subdivision and would be very affected by the proposed highway. The noise along with the close proximity of the highway would greatly decrease my home value. With that being said, I would prefer the highway furthest east. If you are looking for further growth, it would only make sense to build the highway further east to allow for additional growth eastward. On the other hand, I realize the studies are predicting growth in the Bloomington/Normal and thus the need for the highway, however with State Farm growing in other cities i.e. Texas, I wonder if this highway is needed at all.

Thank you

Response:

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal,

such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 (easternmost alternative) over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Did the assessment team ever consider expanding the Lexington to LeRoy road? This would seem to provide some economic development opportunities for these communities and would reduce the farmland needed to build such a path. I am very opposed to using up the finest farmland in the world, a non-renewable resource, for seemingly little benefit. Traffic coming from the north is the only beneficiary of the proposed byway and this traffic could easily use an expanded Lexington/LeRoy path. Traffic from the north, west and south can easily use the current roadways. Please consider expanding already developed roads for such a project. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Resident of Bloomington/Normal for more than 35 years

Response:

An improvement between Lexington to Leroy was assessed early in the ESH planning process. Lexington-Leroy Road is a north-south route located approximately ten miles east of Bloomington-Normal and approximately five miles east of the eastern boundary of the urban development boundaries of the area's 2035 Land Use Plan. Based on the analysis of similar alternatives in the 2009 ESH Corridor Report, a Lexington-Leroy Road alternative would not adequately improve access to or mobility on the major roads in the study area and would not accommodate forecasted growth on the east side due to its distance from the eastern edge of the forecasted growth area. Therefore, an improved Lexington-Leroy Road could not meet the Purpose & Need of the project, and it was eliminated from further consideration.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

Using the existing local road network was considered during the ESH alternative development and analysis process. A Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and a Travel Demand Management (TDM) alternative were developed and evaluated. In general, the purpose of TSM/TDM strategies is to reduce the Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) within the study area, improve traffic flow, increase "through-put" and contribute to environmental conservation and sustainability benefits without any intensive capital investments. As documented in the Reasonable Range of Alternatives Memo, the analysis concluded that the TSM/TDM alternative would not accommodate the future unmet demand based on population and employment projections and the 2035 Land Use Plan, would not reduce traffic congestion in the study area to an acceptable level, and would not satisfy the project's purpose and need.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Good Evening,

I have been made aware of the Eastside highway recently and have a few questions. I am a resident of Harvest Pointe neighborhood and see that option 126 would directly interfere with the current location of my home. What impact will this have on my home and surrounding area? Obviously between the 2 options 127 is better, however neither is preferred. It appears that portions of my neighborhood would need to be demolished in order for 126 to take place. These are new construction homes and I'm surprised this is even being considered.

I apologize for my lack of knowledge in this matter, however was very surprised to hear that this might take place. I fear for the development of the neighborhood as it seems to be thriving with several new constructions currently being built and near completion. I do not feel that this was effectively communicated to residents of this area and to prospective buyers.

Thank you for your assistance in this manner.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the

November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

In order to determine if a specific property is affected, please refer to the interactive map under the "Map" tab on the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com). The remaining alternatives are displayed on an aerial map. You can zoom in to the specific property in question. If you do not have access to the internet, the project team can mail you a map of the area in question if you identify the parcel identification number (PIN) of the property. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the Public Hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced by an ESH was assessed during the alternatives analysis process. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high number of displacements were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), remain criteria of comparison throughout the ESH EA. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the EA, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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I am against either of the proposed alternative and would vote for the 'No Build' option. However if you still have to build and we have to select one option, I would select Alternative 127. Alternative 126 has much more deeper impact to community, infrastructure, business and cost and hence should not be perused with. Below are the reasons based on which my decision was based on:

- 1. Wetland - One of the criteria for the highway evaluation process was to have NO or minimum impact to wetland. Alternative 126 impacts considerable sized wetland (0.75 acre).*
- 2. Business and Resident displacement - While both option displace considerable amount of residence, the most impacted are for alternative 126. 18 resident and 7 business will be impacted by this alternative. That will impact a large amount of families - residing in the impacted houses, their neighbors and neighborhoods, business owners and the families of the people who work at those businesses.*
- 3. Proximity to well established subdivision - Alternative 126 is very close to the well-established subdivisions (lamplighter, Eagle view, etc.) and passes through one of the subdivisions(Harvest Point) east side. The cumulative impact of the proximity of this alternative on the families and their children's in those subdivisions is much more than encompassed in the study.*
- 4. Utility Infrastructure Impacted (higher cost) - As noted in study, there are nearly 7 times more structures impacted for Alternative 126 - The cost to move them is much higher and so will the overall cost be for alternative 126.*
- 5. Proximity to Towanda Barnes Road - There is a well-defined road way that is very close to Alternative 126. Having two roads so close to each other is not ideal since they will not solve the issue that this whole project aims to resolve.*

General Comments for the Project

Overall I am against either of the option simply because:

1. *There is no support from the public for the east side highway. That in itself should be the single largest factor to select the 'No Build' option.*
2. *Money - This project would have a humongous cost associated to it. All of those money will be wasted on building a highway which is not required by the citizens of the town. All of those money should be put to use for maintain the existing roadways and safety of the twin city community. With no public support to the whole project, any funding you will secure for the project (if you would!!) would be a waste of public money.*
3. *Rather than growing the twin city, it will stem the growth of the cities to the limits within the proposed highway.*
4. *The various subdivision and business that will be affected by the project were not notified about the existence of such a plan when the subdivisions / business were established. It will be unfair to all the people who have invested significant amount of money in houses and businesses around there.*

Last and the most important is that the options would remove significant acres of one of the best farmland in the world from agriculture. Its far more important to be able to grow food and feed people then saving a couple of minutes of travel time.

No arguments have justified the need for the project and hence - 'NO BUILD' is the best option.

Thanks you for considering my response.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

Historic trends generally show that communities, including residential areas, are enhanced by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow based on projected employment and population increases. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington-Normal job and commercial centers.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated but will likely be surrounded by other residential developments whether or not the ESH is built.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the Environmental Assessment and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments

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I live in Harvest Pointe and was at the last community meeting at Normal HS. I have a few question(s) regarding the maps that were on display that night. Several maps had the impacted areas highlighted along with some "dots" inside the areas. We were told that these dots represent homes that might be impacted. The map had a June 2013 date on it, but only 5-6 dots were shown in our subdivision. However, the entire corner of our subdivision is in a building mode and all but a few lots have been sold and built on. According to my estimation there are least 12+ homes that might be impacted directly based on the shaded area of the map. My question(s) are when was the last time you drove through the impacted neighborhoods to get an accurate count of homes? Since the home count seems to be off are you going to update the "Residential Displacement" numbers on the final study? With the amount of building occurring this summer, I would assume that your numbers are off for the other subdivisions as well.

Also, I have to take offense to the way the study describes the impact of the highway to our subdivision. The "Description of Impacts" heading (page 5) describes Residential Displacements in the following manner: "Most displaced residences are houses or farm residents outside of subdivisions and are scattered throughout the project area." I am not sure what definition you are using for a subdivision, but this statement is just wrong. Your impacting over 45-60 residences/homes in a SUBDIVISION called Harvest Pointe. We are not outside of a subdivision; we are subdivision with families, children, pets, street parties and neighbors that like each other. Your definition of subdivision is insulting and narrow in my opinion.

Finally, if the dots on the maps at the meeting at Normal HS do in fact represent homes, then I would encourage you take some time to update your numbers showing the overwhelmingly negative impact Option 126 will have on a substantial number homes that you have seemingly forgot to add to the report. Option 127, if any option at all, is the only option that makes sense. Bloomington/Normal is seen as a family community, I would hate to see a study submitted with

*shady numbers that impacts our communities' family values and worse, impacts our subdivision. I believe your numbers are misleading and not representative of current reality in regards to the number of residences that are impacted. As a famous German poet once said.
"There is nothing in the world more shameful than establishing one's self on lies and fables. " -
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

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October 04, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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After careful assessment of these proposals, only one option makes sense: NO BUILD. Aside from killing the property value of the East Side homes, there are long-standing family farms/homes which will be completely eliminated. Displacing families or dropping the value of their investments is not acceptable based on a guess of how the city MIGHT grow several years from now.

The project is FAR too expensive, particularly for a government which is already broke, and the "value" it brings will never offset the cost. The projected growth of Bloomington Normal is merely a guess, and there are rumors of State Farm moving part of their operations down to Georgia. If that comes to fruition (and we know that an immense amount of office space has already been secured there), our economy and population will drastically decline. Currently, the west-side connection of I-74 to I-55 lies only a few miles west, and the struggling west side can't afford to lose any more business as it is.

As far as East Side travel, Towanda-Barnes road can easily fill this niche, for now and for the future. Our families do not need any more debt, State OR Federal, and we certainly don't need any more exposure to fuel pollutants and carcinogens. Leave the East Side green and crop producing, and let's focus on keeping current tax-paying residents happy. Thank you.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies

in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced by an ESH was assessed during the alternatives analysis process. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high number of displacements were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), remain criteria of comparison throughout the Environmental Assessment. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the Environmental Assessment, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a bypass would increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes, with the exception of an I-39/I-74 trip. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing interstate system. A detailed traffic model using existing traffic data and traffic patterns has been developed to ensure that the Preferred Alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will significantly divert traffic from the existing west side Interstate system or draw significant numbers of potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic

projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

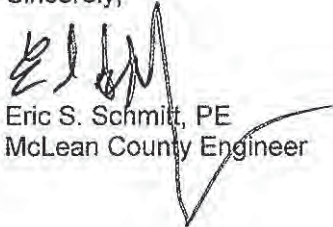
A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Predicted air quality resulting from a roadway project is compared to Air Quality Standards set by the USEPA. The standards, set for six pollutants, are set at concentration levels designed to protect public health. If the standards are not met an area is called "non-attainment" and air quality is required to be improved. The study area meets the air quality standards for all six pollutants for which the USEPA has set standards: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. McLean County is listed as an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Additionally, impacts due to Mobile Source Air Toxics are discussed in the Environmental Assessment document.

In addition, the Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by the McLean County Regional Plan Commission must undergo a conformity analysis to prove that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

We do not feel there is a need for ESH as presented. Since 2007 many changes have occurred to Bloomington culture and dynamics.

Feel many of growth, population, economic factors are not based on current picture. State Farm (by far the largest employer in area) is moving most of it's operations to Southern cities over next few years. Also, once programming for many changes are completed the many "outsourced" employees (whose presence now influence Bloomington statistics) will be leaving the community.

Appears Bloomington has more interest in attracting business and providing roadways for semi-trucks than interest in homeowner's environment or prime farm land preservation.

Economic climate is slowly improving however how many developers are willing to take on the cost of new subdivision development since the city will no longer subsidize the building of roads, sewers, etc.? This will slow development in area.

At a time when both Federal and State spending of taxpayer money needs to be reduced for the financial stability of our country asking for money for this project that is really not needed does not make sense. There is currently a west side corridor and Veterans Pkwy to use to get to 74. Where do reductions start, if not with us?

It appears from the study that the environmental impact of both routes is severe due to displacements of homes and businesses, noise, exhaust fume increase, effects on prime farmland and watershed and that the project should not be recommended to move forward.

No one should have to listen to constant traffic noise 24/7 from a freeway and we all know that walls do not eliminate the noise and exposure just lower it somewhat. Like the quality of life is lowered by this situation.

Expense: If EHS is forced through by the few who want it, the cost for the extra green space and bike lane should be removed-where else do you see a bike lane beside a freeway. (This is catering to a small special interest group at taxpayers' expense.) Maybe, instead, a lane for farm vehicles should be included?

If one route must be selected it should be 127 as it affects fewer homes and business. However, our feeling is that this project should have the "No Build" alternative because of the effect on farmland and farmers.

Consider the Cellular Coliseum debacle and the cost of Heartland College to Community and taxpayers and neither meeting expectations.

Also, IL roads are in deplorable condition-adding another will add more expense to maintain for taxpayers.

Response:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and improved mobility for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment consider many potential impacts of an alternative, such as traffic noise, community impacts, wetlands, water quality, threatened and endangered species, visual impacts, agricultural impacts, and changes in air quality. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the Environmental Assessment, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the Environmental Assessment and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Noise barriers are considered as abatement measures for areas found to have traffic noise impacts from a proposed road. Noise barriers reduce the sound from a roadway by absorbing the sound, transmitting it, reflecting it back across the roadway, or forcing it to take a longer path over and around the barrier. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of roadway. A detailed noise assessment will determine the appropriate location and height of noise walls, if noise impacts from the ESH are identified. A noise barrier must be tall enough and long enough to block the view (or line of sight) of a roadway from the area that is to be protected, the "receiver." The area behind a noise barrier that is most effective at noise reduction is called a "shadow zone." The shadow zone is typically within 200 feet of a noise barrier, depending upon roadway and ground topography, as well as the location of noise receptors.

Noise barriers do not eliminate traffic noise, but instead reduce noise levels to where a number of receptors can be considered "benefitted" by the barrier. Per IDOT noise policy, receptors that experience a noise reduction of 5 dB(A) from a barrier are considered benefitted. This means that road noise can still be heard behind a barrier, but the noise level is reduced.

As part of the development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. Existing and planned bicycle accommodations were inventoried. The proposed multi-use path and ESH crossings are compatible with and complement the existing trail system and will support the planned future land uses in the ESH area. The multi-use path was developed with input from the Alternative Modes Focus Working Group (FWG), composed of local citizens.

Farm vehicles will be prohibited from using the ESH due to IDOT safety policies. IDOT does not allow slow-moving vehicles, such as farm vehicles, to travel on freeway facilities because they travel much slower than the rest of freeway traffic, creating safety concerns due to speed differential. Access to farm parcels has been inventoried for the project area, and has been verified where possible with members of the public and the project's Land Use and Access Management FWG. Access to farm parcels will be maintained where possible. Where existing access to farm parcels is eliminated due to the ESH, access roads or new access from public roads to those farms will be constructed as part of the ESH. Farm vehicles will also be accommodated over ESH along the proposed bridges.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate east-west through travel across the ESH facility, in order to maintain the existing roadway network on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. Interchange, overpass, and underpass bridges will be designed to accommodate farm vehicles safely in order to preserve agricultural mobility and reduce adverse travel impacts.

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. Your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has also been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, the FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

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I do not believe the new interstate bypass is the best option since it seems the primary benefit of the east-side highway is to provide improved connection to interstates 55 and 74 for the cities' east sides. Upgrading county road 1900 East (Towanda Barnes) by providing a direct exit ramp from I-55, widening and straightening the section south of US-150, and adding exit ramps to the existing overpass for I-74 would provide the same access without encouraging truck traffic, creating a new highway that is heavily opposed by the citizens, and destroying additional farmland.

Response:

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.


The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the Environmental Assessment and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

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I would like to voice my opposition to the remaining options for the Eastside Highway. Not only does this affect Harvest Pointe, but several subdivisions in Bloomington/Normal. The addition of a highway on the east side of town this close to our homes will negatively impact many of our homes and their values. Many families will lose their homes, especially if option 126 is chosen. If any highway must be built, then option 127 is the only option. Please take into consideration how much negative impact this will have on our families, our homes and our lives.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered

when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

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I do not believe an East Side highway is necessary. I am opposed to both options 126 and 127. I am especially opposed to 126. Option 126 has an exit ramp going right through the eastern 1/3 of the Harvest Pointe subdivision, where there are existing homes. This would require those homes to be removed and ultimately would have a negative impact to all our property values. Option 126 would also displace residents and have a negative impact to property value for surrounding subdivisions, i.e. Eagle View. Also option 126 would displace 7 businesses. With that being said, if an East Side highway is approved, I would prefer option 127 over option 126.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH Environmental Assessment (EA) may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced by an ESH was assessed during the alternatives analysis process. Alternatives that resulted in a disproportionately high number of displacements were eliminated during the Macro Analysis and Alignment Analysis. The number of homes, commercial buildings and public facilities displaced, or impacted by proximity (noise and air quality), remain criteria of comparison throughout the Environmental Assessment. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including residential effects, is a goal of the Environmental Assessment, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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October 04, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I'm writing to you to provide my feedback regarding the East Side Highway proposal in Bloomington. I recently moved to the Harvest Pointe subdivision, so I am learning about this proposal and I attended your last informational meeting at Normal Community HS. One quick point about that meeting is that they did not do a good job announcing when the presentation would start. Myself and many others were still out looking at then posters and asking questions. No one told us the presentation started, and it made it seem like they didn't want people in there.

As far as the highway goes, I do not think it should be built. I have not seen where the building of this road will benefit the community. There is already a road near by, Towanda Barnes, and I don't think it would be money well spent considering it will only save a few minutes for commuters, the majority of which don't live in Bloomington. The info I heard at meeting talked about narrowing down options not why it was needed. My only assumption is that it will just benefit the people making money from the project and not the residents and businesses affected. Furthermore, there was a recent article in the Pantagraph, regarding the disrepair of IL roads and how they have gotten worse in the last few years even though billions of dollars were earmarked for the repairs. Existing roads should be fixed before new unnecessary projects like the ESH are built. Also, the maps presented do not appear to have an accurate picture of the Harvest Pointe subdivision. The maps only showed a few homes and there many more homes in the subdivision now and many more under construction. The impact to business, homes and farms is not worth the time savings the ESH would supposedly provided.

Lastly, I want to be clear that my vote is for a No Build of the ESH, but if forced to pick an option, I would choose option 127 as it would impact less homes, business, farms, etc. Choosing the other option would destroy the neighborhood my family and I live in. I realized you are not impacted as your firm is not in Bloomington, but I would ask that you put yourself in the shoes of those individuals losing their home or business to this meaningless highway.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, a full access control freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility while reducing crash potential.

The ESH EA is being conducted through the joint efforts of McLean County and the communities of Bloomington and Normal (in coordination with IDOT and FHWA, who recognize the need for additional future transportation capacity on the east and southeast sides of the communities to accommodate forecasted growth. The

transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The project team has not had and continues to have no involvement with developers.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I am a frequent user of route 9 going into Bloomington from the east. I see no need for another four lane highway when there is Towanda Barnes 4-lane highway that could be turned into an east-side highway. Build overpasses over it where other routes connect with it and increase the speed limit. We always have these bright stupid ideas from people that probably don't use the east part of Bloomington that think that is the answer to all problems. Build an east-side highway and in another 20 years that won't be sufficient so let's go out east a little further and build a superhighway. Just remember taking up all the good farmland may shorten your supply of food that so many indulge in. All the money that has been spent on these proposals really irks me when I drive in Bloomington-Normal and have to dodge all the pot holes and uneven pavements. Oh yes, I forgot, it will create many jobs for people.

Response:

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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I feel this project should be completely eliminated! Is no one even thinking about the effects on the West side? If people by-pass Bloomington, Businesses off of the Market street exit will suffer! Can we not have our West side get run down anymore!!!

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a bypass would increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes, with the exception of an I-39/I-74 trip. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing interstate system. A detailed traffic model using existing traffic data and traffic patterns has been developed to ensure that the Preferred Alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will significantly divert

traffic from the existing west side Interstate system or draw significant numbers of potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



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As a resident in McLean County residing in Eagle View Estates subdivision I support the NO Build option. When purchasing this home 5 years ago there was no information to the public regarding the possibility of building an east side highway. Had there been, my husband and I would not have even considered this area. With the new approved park going in I would think there would be rules and regulations to building a highway in such close proximity. With the cost associated with the project I don't feel there is a need big enough to support this effort. I vote NO Build option, but if that doesn't pass then I would vote for the most eastern route, alternative 127.

Please consider the no build option.

Thanks

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

The ESH is being designed per IDOT and FHWA safety standards. There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered for parks and other resources in the EA.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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I live in Harvest Pointe and will be directly impacted by Proposal 126 and 127. I am very concerned about proposal 126 specifically. Per the map provided, 126 looks to be in my backyard! 127 not that much further off. I am concerned about my home value, road congestion, and highway noise...to name a few things. I propose NO build but if a proposal is taken I hope it is 127, it is the only one that make sense in my eyes.

My family and I just moved to our dream home in Harvest Pointe with the intention to never move again. I have a wife and 2 kids that love this home and our location. I do not see the necessity in this project for the Bloomington/Normal area.

I am curious to see the last 4 years of statistics that you have been gathering on population, employment, traffic, etc...since you have no updated numbers past 2009 and some stats taken in 2005. I feel your information is not fully accurate and seems it would be very difficult to make a decision without the most recent information.

Another major concern is funding. I see that you list the "Illinois Jobs Now" program as a prime source of funding. That program is a bust and had to borrow money from the state road fund to make required debt service payments on the bonds issued so far. So, the Illinois tax payers would pay for this project once again...which includes me and my family. I propose no build!

Thanks you for your time

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH will also relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. This study will identify east-west routes that need to be improved to accommodate increased volume that would occur as a result of the ESH.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The ESH EA is funded through the "Illinois Jobs Now" Capital Bill and administered through the Illinois Department of Transportation. As you indicate, if balances are insufficient, the Capital Projects Fund's enabling legislation provides for transfers from the Road Fund to cover service for bonds issued before January 1, 2012.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 4, 2013

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Question Regarding Primary Function of Proposed East Side Highway

Since its inception, this project has been quite confusing to many in this area. Here's the source of confusion: The term, "Bypass" has been widely used for several years to describe the project. To most, Bypass means the primary function of the road is to provide a convenient and speedy connection between I-55 (both north and south) and I-74 (both east and west). As recently today, a major editorial in The Bloomington Pantagraph described the major function of this proposed road thusly, "The highway, to be built to freeway standards, would in essence provide a fast-moving way to connect Interstate 55 to Interstate 74 as the Twin Cities continue to grow to the east."

Having been involved in this proposed project since its inception, I specifically recall the origin having little or nothing to do with connection to I-55 and I-74. Rather, its proposed function is to facilitate mainly local traffic from the Bloomington-Normal McLean County area to major local destinations of employment, social and retail areas, CIRA (airport), residential areas and the like.

Can you clarify this confusion for us?

Response:

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future

growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, P.E.
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

127 is far the best alternative, because.

- 1. Fewer homes are displaced*
- 2. # 126 would become an alternative to Towanda Barnes Rd meaning we would end up with Two Towanda Barnes roads instead of 1 Towanda Barnes (want one) and 1 interstate road between I-74 and I-55 as is the real purpose.*
- 3. Therefore, # 127 is by far the best alternative.*
- 4. Each alternative requires displacement of a great amount of farm land, so with fewer homes displaced, # 127 is much better.*

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 and the reasons for the preference have been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

Eric S. Schmitt PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

No, no, no!!! Do not build. Waste of money. Not needed. If a Bypass is built, build from Lexington to Leroy, but we do not need Veterans parkway 2.0. And stop using out dated reports – Growth is not an issue, as it might have been in 2006. STOP THIS INSANITY!!!

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

An improvement between Lexington to Leroy was assessed early in the ESH planning process. Lexington-Leroy Road is a north-south route located approximately ten miles east of Bloomington-Normal and approximately five miles east of the eastern boundary of the urban development boundaries of the area's 2035 Land Use Plan. Based on the analysis of similar alternatives in the 2009 ESH Corridor Report, a Lexington-Leroy Road alternative would not adequately improve access to or mobility on the major roads in the study area and would not accommodate forecasted growth on the east side due to its distance from the eastern edge of the forecasted growth area. Therefore, an improved Lexington-Leroy Road could not meet the Purpose & Need of the project, and it was eliminated from further consideration.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 04, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Re: East Side Highway Alternatives

Thank you for providing an update on plans for the East Side Highway in a public forum on June 19, 2013. The presentation was informative, but did not providing a convincing rationale for building a new highway connecting 174 and 155, so close to an existing major road which essentially does or could do the same thing. The stated purpose of the highway has been to relieve current and anticipated future congestion on east-west Bloomington/Normal streets and north-south traffic on Veterans Parkway. The 8 interchanges on the proposed East Side Highway are intended to give access to the east-west streets, and somehow relieve congestion, but it is highly unlikely that the final plans for the highway will have that many interchanges, since they are so close together. Fewer interchanges will mean fewer access points from the highway into Bloomington/Normal, with less capacity to relieve the supposed growing street congestion.

The planners have not demonstrated that a new north-south highway a half mile from Towanda Barnes can alleviate east-west B/N street congestion. Cars coming off of the East Side Highway interchanges will face similar traffic light problems at key intersections that slow down traffic now on Towanda Barnes during rush hour.

It appears that the real reason for the East Side Highway is to provide a quicker route for regional traffic to travel from 174 to 155. That may speed access to businesses and locations like the Central Regional Illinois Airport (CIRA), which is a very good thing, but would substantially harm many homeowners along the proposed East Side Highway route. It is clear to many people in the community that the best way to provide improved north-south, eastside, non-truck traffic flow is to expand Towanda Barnes above Fort Jesse and below Empire and connect that road to 155 and 174. That would certainly improve access to major businesses on the east side and provide substantial opportunities for commercial growth.

Two options for the East Side Highway were presented at the June 19th meeting. Option 126 is particularly harmful in that it is nearly adjacent to two major housing developments in the area of Fort Jesse (Eagle View) and Ireland Road (The Grove). New homes are continuing to be built within a few hundred feet of the proposed Option 126 route (i.e., at Rexal and Brookline, Sutter and Riverwoods, Tyler near Lay in Eagle View). More importantly, a vast 14.5 acre new city park is currently being constructed (infrastructure work is underway today) in the Eagle View development at Anabelle Drive and Baywood Road. That park is directly south and nearly adjacent to the proposed Option 126 route. It would be extremely harmful to the health of children playing in that park to have a freeway with high volume polluting truck and car traffic so close to the park. In addition, a new elementary school may be located at the intersection of Towanda Barnes and GE, which would be a half mile from the proposed Option 126 route. A major highway so close to the school might create traffic safety and health risks at that location. Apparently neither of these projects are accounted for in your impact summary table. In addition, Option 126 has greater negative impact than Option 127 on all six of the non-agricultural/sustainability criteria.

Neither Option 126 nor 127 are desirable, because they incur a \$300 million expense to solve a problem that doesn't exist. Of the two options, Option 126 is definitely the least preferred because of its severe negative effect on homeowners, and on plans to build a park and facilities for the community.

I urge you not to continue spending our tax dollars by pursuing this unnecessary highway project.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH will also relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. This study will identify east-west routes that need to be improved to accommodate increased volume that would occur as a result of the ESH. Recommendations regarding east-west arterial street improvements will be included in the final report.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following IDOT freeway interchange spacing standards. The location of interchanges was based on traffic volumes and input from the Community Working Groups (CWG) and Project Study Group (PSG).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.


The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

The ESH is being designed per IDOT and FHWA safety standards. There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a school or park must be distanced from a freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the Environmental Assessment. The EA will include the evaluation of all existing schools and parks as well as schools that have been incorporated into area comprehensive plans. The EA cannot take into account structures that are not officially planned. For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

How does this help our town. Other cities don't have loops and do just fine. Lets bring truck stops and truck washes to other side of town cause that's who going to use the ridiculous idea. It's not daily commuters. Horrible idea.

Response:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs.

The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and improved mobility for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 4, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Public Information Meeting

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To Whom this Concerns,

We have moved out of state recently to the B/N area and were not told of an impending highway project like is being described. When we bought this new house that should have been shared. The question I have is what is the impact to our property values when there is a highway very close to the Grove subdivision? This concerns me and the community greatly. I don't see any studies on impact to brand new house values.

Response:

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 02, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I am very upset with the thought of a highway by-pass being established on Ziebarth Rd. I live at the edge of my yard--is a mere 70 feet from the current edge of the road. The side of my house--not the back--is a well-traveled road will not only be extremely annoying because of noise and traffic, but will totally destroy the value of my home.

Please reconsider!

Response:

Improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included as part of the ESH project. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied when the ESH Preferred Alternative undergoes detailed traffic modeling. East-west roadway improvements needed due to the ESH will be identified in the EA, and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 02, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

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*Prefer 127
I want to save money and not build an unneeded bike path.*

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

As part of the development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. Existing and planned bicycle accommodations were inventoried. The proposed multi-use path and ESH crossings are compatible with and complement the existing trail system and will support the planned future land uses in the ESH area. The multi-use path was developed with input from the Alternative Modes Focus Working Group (FWG), composed of local citizens.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Preferred Alternative: #127

To whom it may concern:

We, _____ prefer Alternative 127, although we do not submit this preference willingly as we oppose the East Side Highway proposal in its entirety. This highway proposal is apparently based purely on 2035 growth projection, which some could liken to Mayan Calendar. Although we're dealing with future impact, no one has outlined any tangible benefits to the Bloomington-Normal area. We're talking about an area that struggles to maintain its existing infrastructure.

We are one of the original homeowners in the Eagle View subdivision. We relocated from California for employment reasons and moved into our home located _____ July of 2005. During our numerous discussions with our builder and realtor, there was never any mention of an east side highway. Most of the conversations centered around living on the east side, in a new and coveted subdivision with plans for a residential park, and within the Unit 5 School District boundaries.

We find it ironic coming from one cashed strapped state to another, that Illinois and Bloomington-Normal would even entertain the thought of such a costly and disruptive project. We question the population projections based on our now eight (8) years of living in the Bloomington-Normal area and also question any insurance industry growth projections based on our combined thirty-five (35) plus years of employment experience, including consolidation and relocation, with a major insurance company.

We are not concerned with the location and proximity of the east side highway but also the proposed Fort Jesse interchange as our home backs up to Forth Jesse Road, east of Towanda Barnes Road. We are confident that our other concerns align with the residents of Eagle View and other impacted subdivisions:

- *Increased traffic along Towanda Barnes and east of Forth Jesse which will impact the inlets/outlets for the Eagle View subdivisions.*
 - *Increased noise and air pollution*
 - *Decreased property value and neighborhood appeal*
 - *Unable to sell to value or sell at all*
 - *Eyesore – both highway and potential noise barrier(S)*
 - *Residential safety issue – highway proves accessible entry / exit to offenders*
 - *Potential soil/settlement issues due to heavy construction*
- Thank you for your consideration*

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH will also relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. This study will identify east-west routes that need to be improved to accommodate increased volume that would occur as a result of the ESH. Recommendations regarding east-west arterial street improvements will be included in the final report.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build

traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Predicted air quality resulting from a roadway project is compared to Air Quality Standards set by the USEPA. The standards, set for six pollutants, are set at concentration levels designed to protect public health. If the standards are not met an area is called "non-attainment" and air quality is required to be improved. The study area meets the air quality standards for all six pollutants for which the USEPA has set standards: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. McLean County is listed as an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Additionally, impacts due to Mobile Source Air Toxics are discussed in the EA document.

In addition, the Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by the McLean County Regional Plan Commission must undergo a conformity analysis to prove that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Visual impacts will be assessed in the EA document and mitigated when appropriate. A Sustainability Focus Working Group (FWG) composed of local citizens was formed and landscaping and aesthetics were discussed with the group.

During the later stages of the EA, geotechnical investigations will be conducted to determine soil types and identify locations of unsuitable material that may contribute to unacceptable ground settlement. Construction practices will account for the remediation or removal of any unsuitable soils in the roadbed.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Neither is needed – State can't pay for it so can't afford it.

Response:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 3, 2013

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I prefer the No Build option. We just purchased a lot in Harvest Pointe subdivision

This purchase was min February & signed a contract to build a home 2 weeks before we found out about the East Side Highway project. If we knew about ESH, we would not have bought our future home there. We have moved 3 times and this house is to be our home until retirement. We also bought this house to start a family. This was the ideal spot to raise a family. Now we have been hit with this ESH proposal and are lost for words. This would crush our dream home. This would displace us and would effect the value and future sale of our home if not demolished.

Towanda Barnes is already used by many as a shortcut on the east side of town. Why not save billions of money our state doesn't have in the first place and use roads we already have. Does building a highway to reduce time for travelers on 74 to 55 north by about 5-10 minutes. Really worth effecting several families and businesses? If this ESH is approved for build our lives our ruined as you are taking away our home, our hard earned money and time, and the chance for our kids to grow up on a quiet, non-commercialized area that my family visioned to call home for the next 30 years. So the "No Build" is my choice. Alternatives 126 and 127 are unnecessary for this town and a waste of state money that can go on something else more important.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public

comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

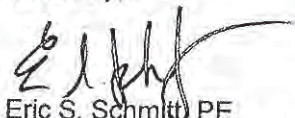
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The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public

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Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, a full access control freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility while reducing crash potential.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



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McLean County Engineer



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October 03, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to express my opposition to the Eastside Highway project in Bloomington, IL. As a taxpayer and as a resident of one of the affected neighborhoods in the project, I strongly oppose it. My preferences in terms of option to pursue are in the following order:

- 1. No Build option (strong preference)*
- 2. Option 127*
- 3. Option 126*

First, I live in the Harvest Pointe subdivision which will be affected by either build option. Our family moved into Harvest Pointe in October of 2012 when the neighborhood was just really starting to develop. In just those last 8-9 months the growth of the Harvest Pointe neighborhood has been tremendous. There are at least nine additional homes on our street that have been built or are currently in the process since just that time. This doesn't include homes that have been built or are being built on the other street. Nearly all of our neighbors selected Harvest Pointe for building for similar reasons... that the development was quiet, yet close to town, still had somewhat of a rural feel but still good access, etc. If the ESH project goes forth, this will all change.

If option 126 is pursued, the exit will go directly through our neighborhood, eliminating brand-new residences. All property values will decrease just when they have started to rebound since the economic downturn in 2008. If that happens, future growth in the development will also probably come to an immediate halt. No one will want to purchase or build a home in a neighborhood with a planned freeway exit going right through it. Although Option 127 is not preferred over not building at all, it is a better option than 126 given that there will at least be a small distance from the neighborhood.

Although the above mentioned thoughts are personal reasons for opposition to the ESH project, I also oppose the project for public reasons. Since moving to Bloomington and Illinois last fall, we have found both the town and state to be extremely unfriendly to taxpayers. Our property taxes, along with everyone else we know, are sky-high compared to nearly anywhere else we and others have relocated from. This project would increase those taxes even more to support a project that isn't even needed. Taxes will eventually be so high in McLean County that it won't be very sustainable to even continue living here. The population growth estimates for this study are most likely flawed. Because of Illinois's bad business climate, the growth of State Farm will not be in Bloomington but in the southern United States. Without growth from State Farm, McLean County population will not grow nearly aggressively as has been previously stated, making it extremely questionable whether the highway is even needed.

Again, I strongly oppose the Eastside Highway project. However, if one of the two remaining options must be selected, I would prefer Option 127 strongly over Option 126.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (EA and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Good afternoon

As a resident of the Harvest Pointe subdivision in Bloomington, I would like to voice my strong displeasure for the proposed East Side Highway project, both options 126 and 127. I find option 126 particularly egregious because that would involve the highway running through our neighborhood and the displacement of several new homes and families. In addition, the financial impact to the residents of our neighborhood would be extremely impactful. My family's livelihood, in addition to the livelihood of several other families would be severely affected by this decision due to severe reduction in property values. I refuse to believe that any minimal positives gained by an Eastside Highway would offset the damage done to these families.

I also strongly question any benefits associated to this new highway. After reviewing the documents provided and speaking with several neighbors, we have been pondering the same question. Is a highway truly needed when Towanda Barnes Road already provides a sufficient means of travel on the east side of town?

I cannot stress enough my overall displeasure with how this proposal and subsequent meetings have been handled. There are now discussions of new buyers in our neighborhood potentially voiding their purchase agreements because of the mere proposal of the terrible option 126. In doing so, I would argue that some potential damage to our property values has already been done. That is extremely disheartening when considering the cost of these homes, financial loss to families, the pride in our neighborhood, and the fact that we are still in a rebounding economy. Bloomington is already not very family friendly from a cost perspective due to large sales and property taxes, and the handling of this situation has only exacerbated the financial strain on families in this community.

I urge you, please withdraw any consideration of option 126 at this time. I think I speak for many people in our neighborhood when I say that option 127 is not favorable either, and I would prefer that neither option is selected at this time. I look forward to receiving a reply to my e-mail in a timely manner and my comments being considered as part of the public record. Thank you.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

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The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does

not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

Every comment that is received within the public comment period is answered individually and the comments are posted to the project website so that other stakeholders can access the response letters. The Public Hearing is tentatively planned to be held in the second quarter of 2014.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

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We are screwed no matter what alternative you use. We still vote for no freeway. We do not need it now or in the future. We do not expect the growth to be as it predicted. We have lived in our home for almost 50 years and would like to stay here for another 30 years or more if God so desires.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt PE
McLean County Engineer

October 3, 2013

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As my wife said in her comment we are screwed no matter what alternative you use. We feel this freeway is not needed now or in the future. We have lived here for almost 50 years and would like to live here another 30 or more years if our Lord and Savior so desires. We are praying that the money will not be provided for this project.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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If this eastside highway project must be done, then we vote for Alternative 127. It displaces 5 fewer Residential, 7 fewer Business displacements, 4 fewer Farm Residences, and 12 fewer Farm Outbuildings. That means 28 fewer buildings destroyed and fewer people being stressed with finding a new place to live. Alternative 127 also has the advantage of affecting 28 fewer utility infrastructures. It also affects fewer wetland acres. Fewer obstacles overall, I would assume, means a faster build, which could help with cost.

The worst thing we see about this project is the amount of Landlocked Parcels for either 126 or 127. We urge you to come up with some creative way to allow access to reduce the number those, which could make this project more palatable to the owners of those parcels.

We are not big on publicity, so, we ask for confidentiality where possible.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

Landlocked agricultural parcels have been identified and reported in the alternatives analysis for the ESH. A Focus Working Group (FWG) consisting of farmers and agricultural representatives was formed to address issues of land use and access management. At the FWG meetings, input was sought on ways to address farm vehicle access and as a result, farm access roads are being proposed as part of the ESH to allow access to all nearby farm parcels.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration

(FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer

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I don't want any interstate and each choice is poor. However, alternative 126 would be my preferred choice since it is less impactful to the grove at Kickapoo Creek subdivision, its residents, and the Benjamin School. School children and residents should be as far away from traffic, pollution, noise, and 18 wheel vehicles. Also, need to go as far from the Creek due to environmental reasons.

Vote for alternative 126

This will be a highway to nowhere. It is not needed and will be a waste of money. The noise level and pollution will ruin the quality of life for the grove at Kickapoo Creek subdivision, as well as Benjamin Elementary. This is too close to the subdivision and school. Horrible to do this to the largest planned subdivision planned in the Bloomington/Normal area and the largest school. If this is build, no one will move the East side and 2035 projections will be moot. They will go the west side of Bloomington instead.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. Your preference for Alternative 126 over Alternative 127 has also been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build

Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions, including The Grove, than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH Environmental Assessment (EA) may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being designed IDOT and FHWA safety standards. There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a school must be distanced from a freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment will include the evaluation of all existing schools and schools that have been incorporated into area comprehensive plans.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The project team is aware of the EPA grant and work being done on the Kickapoo Creek near The Grove, and efforts to minimize impacts will be ongoing as the Preferred Alternative is developed. The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in the alternatives analysis for the ESH. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, highly erodible soils, number of stream crossings, acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected, and the percentage impacted of the overall watershed. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality were investigated in detail during the Environmental Assessment Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) composed of local citizens was formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction. iLAST, the Illinois Livable and Sustainable Transportation Rating System and Guide, has been used with the FWG to identify preferred Best Management Practices (BMPs) to mitigate impacts. The incorporation of green infrastructure features, such as filter strips, bioswales, meandering swales, infiltration basins, and plantings will minimize potential effects of construction and storm water management upon streams.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.


Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Predicted air quality resulting from a roadway project is compared to Air Quality Standards set by the USEPA. The standards, set for six pollutants, are set at concentration levels designed to protect public health. If the standards are not met an area is called "non-attainment" and air quality is required to be improved. The study area meets the air quality standards for all six pollutants for which the USEPA has set standards: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. McLean County is listed as an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Additionally, impacts due to Mobile Source Air Toxics are discussed in the Environmental Assessment document.

In addition, the Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by the McLean County Regional Plan Commission must undergo a conformity analysis to prove that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 3, 2013

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Comments on the East Side Highway alternatives 126 and 127. Submitted 2 July 2013.

Representatives of the Friends of Kickapoo Creek (based in Downs) and the JWP Audubon Society (covering Bloomington-Normal and McLean County) continue to participate in the Environmental Assessment component of the East Side Highway corridor which would impact the watersheds of Kickapoo Creek and Money Creek. Our participation over the years in the Focus Working Group and the Community Working Group is based on our interests in habitat (terrestrial and aquatic) quality issues and protecting native biota. Additionally, we want to be sure that the public investments in establishing the two nature preserves within the project impact area, the 80-acre wetlands/prairie/stream restoration along Kickapoo Creek (The Grove Park of Bloomington) and the Kenneth L. Schroeder Wildlife Reserve (of the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation district) along the Little Kickapoo Creek, are not negatively affected.

We are pleased that this highway planning process is utilizing I-Last (Illinois-Living and Sustainable Transportation Rating System and Guide). This is particularly needed to protect The Grove Park from highway-caused sedimentation inputs and all streams from salt overload. We hope that the array of BMPs considered (natural bottom culverts, meandering swales, filter strips, bioswales/vegetated swales, plantings, median utilization, infiltration basins and trenches, riparian buffers) will be fully implemented should the highway be built.

In our comments submitted in January 2012, we stated that the final alignment should minimize the following: 1) impacts on Kickapoo Creek + tributaries, riparian areas, wetlands, and water

quality; 2) loss of farmland; and 3) sprawl development. Upon review of the June 2013 document comparing alternatives 126 and 127, we paid special attention to the following parameters: 1) wetland acreage impacts, 2) area of new pavement required, 3) highly erodible soils acreage impacts, and 4) prime and important farmland acreage impacts. Alternative 126 minimizes parameters 2, 3, and 4 whereas alternative 127 minimizes parameter 1. However, we are particularly concerned about impacts on The Grove Park via effects on the upstream unnamed tributaries to Kickapoo Creek, which are linked to highly erodible soils and the amount of new impermeable pavement needed. We conclude that although 0.6097 more acres of wetlands will be impacted by alternative 126, alternative 126 will cause less overall impact on The Grove wetland restoration and Kickapoo Creek because it will be further away to the west from both. Therefore, if the choice is only between alternatives 126 and 127, we recommend choosing alternative 126 as the one that minimizes overall environmental impacts.

The third alternative, "No Build", is actually our preferred alternative. The only reason for the East Side Highway is to accommodate growth that is being fostered by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission's 2035 land use plan. We recommend that this land use plan be revised so as to protect the prime farmland now targeted or enabled for development between the current municipality limit and the East Side Highway alternatives. It seems inevitable that either alternative will hasten development of farmland that the American Farmland Trust [www.farmland.org/resources/fote/states/map_illinois.asp] has ranked as some of the best, and most endangered by development, in the United States.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 126 over Alternative 127 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The project team is aware of the EPA grant and work being done on the Kickapoo Creek near The Grove, and efforts to minimize impacts will be ongoing as the Preferred Alternative is developed. The impacts of the alternatives crossing the Kickapoo Creek watershed were considered in the alternatives analysis for the ESH. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, highly erodible soils, number of stream crossings, acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected, and the percentage impacted of the overall watershed. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, and water quality were investigated in detail during the EA Analysis for the alignments remaining under consideration.

As a member of the Focus Working Group (FWG), you are familiar with our efforts to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction. ILAST, the Illinois Livable and Sustainable Transportation Rating System and Guide, has been used with the FWG to identify preferred Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts. The incorporation of green infrastructure features, such as filter strips, bioswales, meandering swales, infiltration basins, and plantings will minimize potential effects of construction and storm water management upon streams. These green infrastructure features will be used to address highly erodible soils and reduce water quality impacts near The Grove, as that is an important environmental feature of the project corridor. We will continue to work with the FWG on green infrastructure concepts when the Preferred Alternative is identified.

The City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County, in conjunction with the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, are responsible for the Comprehensive Plan which includes future land use plans. The Comprehensive Plan review committee included community and interest group representatives. The ESH project team has no authority over the 2035 Land Use Plan and must consider the area's accepted comprehensive plan in planning for the ESH. The project team will pass along your comment regarding the 2035 Land Use Plan to the appropriate planning agencies.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer

cc:



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

*I have been following along on the progress of the East Side Highway Project for the last 2 years.
I live in the Lakeview Estates subdivision*

I am also the Vice President of our homeowners association.

Since the routing of the proposed highway comes close to our subdivision, most of our residents are concerned about what the proposed highway will bring to our area. I think everyone agrees that it is better to plan for progress than to react to it. Discussions about the highway project are a step in the right direction.

After careful consideration, I have compiled a list of proposals I am in favor of, and a list of items I am not in favor of, and submit them for review.

Items in favor of:

- 1) Arterial road. An uninterrupted highway is not required for this area. The I-55 interstate works just fine.*
- 2) Alternate 127. Since only 2 choices are given, 127 is the one that makes most sense.*
- 3) 4 lanes with right and left turn lanes at all intersections.*
- 4) Allocate land for future right turn lanes into businesses, subdivisions, etc.*
- 5) Reroute west end of Cheney's Grove Road to tie into future Hamilton road extension.*

Items not in favor of:

- 1) Freeway or expressway. There is no justification for an east side bypass.*
- 2) No overpasses or underpasses except at RR tracks, I-55 and I-74.*

- 3) *A dedicated bike path. Instead, I suggest widening the road to accommodate bikes on the right side of the road. (Please do not make the same mistake the County made when they widened Towanda-Barnes road. There are few right turn lanes and no shoulder for bicyclists to ride on).*
- 4) *I view future road expansion as a nice thing to do, but not a need. Therefore, at a time when the State of Illinois cannot pay its current bills, it would be foolish to spend money we do not have at this time.*

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (for new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control), but when modeled with projected 2035 traffic it results in similar congestion conditions as existing Veterans Parkway. An expressway such as US 51 south of Bloomington has no advantages over a freeway option, given the number of interchanges that would be required per Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) policy. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This variance in speed would create an unsafe condition for motorists and could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

As part of the development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. Existing and planned bicycle accommodations were inventoried. The proposed multi-use path and ESH crossings are compatible with and complement the existing trail system and will support the planned future land uses in the ESH area. The multi-use path was developed with input from the Alternative Modes Focus Working Group (FWG), composed of local citizens.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the

recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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The No Build Option was not presented and is preferred to either 126 or 127. The future land use drawing also did not show population increases justified by a 300+ million highway.

If government chooses not to listen to the public and the overwhelming majority against this project, at the minimum – sound barriers such as those used on I 355 must be used to mitigate the constant drone of highway traffic.

I do not support either 126 or 127. Only no build.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.


A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT) policies will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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I think you completed a very good and thorough process. I support the alternative 126.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Please continue to attend the Public Information Meetings and submit feedback throughout the remainder of the project.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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First and foremost, I would like to comment that I still believe that the future population growth numbers, on which this project is based, are way too high. State Farm's announcement that they will not be adding employees here confirms my assumption. Therefore, my support still goes to the No Build option.

If I have to choose the lesser of the two evils, as presented here, I would have to support ALT #127. I do not think that a proposed highway like this can be planned to blow through an existing neighborhood like harvest point. The remaining houses would also be negatively impacted, basically becoming un-sellable – I am surprised this option make it this far – the highway should be east of the Grove on 2100

I am also still somewhat confused by the constantly repeated lie that this is not a by-pass. It is obvious to everyone who sees it that anyone going from 74 to 55 or vice versa will use it. If it is truly supposed to only reduce East side congestion, then let's remove the two interstate connections. In my world, the only time I would use it is when I was going to Champaign or Chicago. I would not take it to go to Menards.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended

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According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

Several alternatives that utilize a portion of existing roads, including Towanda Barnes Road, CR 2000 E and CR 2100 E, were evaluated and included in the alternative analysis evaluation. Alternatives that utilize Towanda Barnes Road and CR 2100 E were eliminated during the alternative analysis process due to disproportionately high environmental and/or community impacts. Alternative 127 does follow the existing CR 2000 E alignment north of General Electric Road.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

Using the proposed ESH as a bypass would increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes, with the exception of an I-39/I-74 trip. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing interstate system. A detailed traffic model using existing traffic data and traffic patterns has been developed to ensure that the Preferred Alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will significantly divert traffic from the existing west side Interstate system. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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If it must be done, I would prefer Alternative 127. It moves is furthest away from residential neighborhoods who will be impacted the most.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the

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I think any bypass around east side Bloomington/Normal would be a waste of taxpayers money. I feel very few people would use it. With the status of our Federal and State economy I think it would be a waste of money needed else ware. Put the money toward repairing existing roads, bridges, tunnels. The US infrastructure is rotting at a terrible pace. Stop wasting the best farmland in the world.

Response:

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The funding for the ESH EA comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering on the ESH. Capital Bill funds can only be used for projects specifically identified by the legislature or the governor's office. If the McLean County Board would have voted against studying the project, the funds could not be used elsewhere in McLean County for any other purpose and cannot be reallocated for use on any other activity.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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No to the whole mess of an East Hiway. Not needed! A waste of tax payers moneys. A very costly project – the country, State, and city are in the tank moneywise. So why push it!?! The hiway would foul up all drainage, leave small, fertile field, with no access for machinery to get to land to farm. Land value will decrease. The bike trail a big laugh, ya keep adding "little perks" here and there. Again, the community cannot afford an east hiway. We, who live next to so – called hiway – what about construction noise, plus, when hiway is completed – noise abatement?? We live in the country farm by choice. We don't' need city developers telling us we need a hiway going thru creating unattractive view, noise, trash, and more traffic.

Also, the moneys spent on these studies is outrageous, a RAPE of the public. Why not a VOTE to see if people are for the unwanted hiway! A big, fat force!! The BIG economic growth is not going to happen. SO give up pushing for an East Hiway. The hiway is not essential by any reason nor means.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the

Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

Farm vehicles will be prohibited from using the ESH due to IDOT safety policies. IDOT does not allow slow-moving vehicles, such as farm vehicles, to travel on freeway facilities because they travel much slower than the rest of freeway traffic, creating safety concerns due to speed differential. Access to farm parcels has been inventoried for the project area, and has been verified where possible with members of the public and the project's Land Use and Access Management Focused Working Group (FWG). Access to farm parcels will be maintained where possible. Where existing access to farm parcels is eliminated due to the ESH, access roads or new access from public roads to those farms will be constructed as part of the ESH. Farm vehicles will also be accommodated over ESH along the proposed bridges.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate east-west through travel across the ESH facility, in order to maintain the existing roadway network on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. Interchange, overpass, and underpass bridges will be designed to accommodate farm vehicles safely in order to preserve agricultural mobility and reduce adverse travel impacts.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

As part of the development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. Existing and planned bicycle accommodations were inventoried. The proposed multi-use path and ESH crossings are compatible with and complement the existing trail system and will support the planned future land uses in the ESH area. The multi-use path was developed with input from the Alternative FWG, composed of local citizens.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

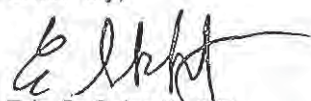
The ESH will also relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. This study will identify east-west routes that need to be improved to accommodate increased volume that would occur as a result of the ESH. Recommendations regarding east-west arterial street improvements will be included in the final report.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
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127 appear to be the best alternative as it affects the smallest number of existing residences. It will affect farmland but no bigger effect than 126. Road noise must be considered as to the road topping and avoid tire clapping.

This decision needs to be made quickly so future development can be decided on properly.

The freeway type road makes the most sense. This will have the least effect on residences due to future business development. It also has smaller effect on traffic flow on major east west streets.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Thank you for providing your comment on facility type. The freeway option is recommended as the proposed facility type for the ESH as it is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,



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To Whom It May Concern,

The purpose of this email is to submit my public comment in regard to East Side Highway. My family and I recently relocated to Bloomington from Heyworth. After long discussions, we decided to build in Eagle View Subdivision. We closed on our house November 1, 2012.

I strongly support the NO BUILD option for this highway. This subdivision is currently creating a park for children and families to enjoy. I don't think it is smart to put any highway within 1 or 2 miles of a park or a neighborhood.

As a new homeowner that invested a large amount of money into the city of Bloomington within the last year, I strongly oppose either option of ESH.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the

Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project, and the priority of the FHWA, IDOT, and McLean County. A detailed safety evaluation of the Preferred Alternative will be included in the EA document. Proximity impacts to schools, residential areas, and parks will be evaluated in the EA. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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To whom it may concern:

I am writing this to you to express our deep concern with the proposed east side highway build. We as property owners in this neighborhood are extremely opposed to this highway going in. I would have NEVER considered moving into a home that had a major highway zooming by our yard. We have 3 small children, and the reason we purchased a home in Harvest Pointe was because we loved the quiet, peaceful atmosphere, with no traffic to speak of. Not only will it environmentally impact the land around us, it will drastically decrease property value for our homes that are within the subdivision. This neighborhood has dreams of having a park for our children to play, not a loud, dangerous highway looming nearby.

I also do not understand the need for this structure in this town, nor do I pretend to understand how our state can afford a project like this, or why we would choose to flush funding into something that all the east side residents of Bloomington unanimously find destructive.

IF a build cannot be avoided I would ask you to choose plan 127, although I stress I am against either plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration...

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the ESH EA consider many potential impacts of an alternative, such as traffic noise, community impacts, wetlands, water quality, threatened and endangered species, visual impacts, agricultural impacts, and changes in air quality. Per NEPA, environmental impacts should be avoided or minimized when feasible. NEPA does not require an agency to select the environmentally preferable alternative or prohibit adverse environmental effects. Agencies may have other policy considerations to take into account in the decision-making process, such as social, economic, or technical interests. NEPA does require that an agency be informed of the environmental consequences of their decision.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The ESH is being designed per IDOT and FHWA safety standards. There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a neighborhood park must be distanced from a freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered for parks and other resources in the EA.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

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We do not support the construction of an eastside highway, period. The options and supporting information are outdated and reconsideration should be given to reviewing the employer base in Bloomington and their projected growth. State Farm is not growing its business in Bloomington, in fact it is at zero growth and moving resources and jobs to major metropolitan cities, posing the likelihood that Bloomington- Normal will not grow as projected. As a resident of Bloomington and a resident of a subdivision that is directly impacted by this proposal, it is unsubstantiated as to the benefits the highway will provide to the Bloomington-Normal community and businesses that would be impacted.

Both proposed options will decrease the property value of our home, Option 126 more than 127. There is a risk of increased crime with the proximity of the highway to our residence. There will definitely be increased noise and air pollution. A highway would not be esthetically appealing to anyone and will impact our health and the health of others in our neighborhood.

Our home will be within 800 feet the proposed highway with option 126, we are definitely opposed to this option as it will impact our property value, our ability to sell our home if we choose do so and negatively impact our overall quality of life. Option 126 negatively impacts more homes than option 127. Limiting the number of impacted, existing home must be the highest consideration if the proposal to build moves forward.

With the current dire straits of the state, county, and city of Bloomington finances it does not make sense to needlessly spend money on something that may not be needed. The state should focus its finances and resources to expanding 355 west through the Long Grove/Route 12 corridor. This is significantly greater need that would affect a much greater user base than the proposer 126 or 127 options. The development of Bloomington has changed since the proposal

review was initiated several years ago along with current state and future projects in this economy.

We are not supportive of either option 126 or 127. If the state, city and county believes an eastside highway is required, we would choose to have option 127 selected. It poses less of an impact to our residence and other residences and would moderately reduce some of the negative impacts to us personally.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

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With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Predicted air quality resulting from a roadway project is compared to Air Quality Standards set by the USEPA. The standards, set for six pollutants, are set at concentration levels designed to protect public health. If the standards are not met an area is called "non-attainment" and air quality is required to be improved. The study area meets the air quality standards for all six pollutants for which the USEPA has set standards: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. McLean County is listed as an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Additionally, impacts due to Mobile Source Air Toxics are discussed in the EA document.

In addition, the Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by the McLean County Regional Plan Commission must undergo a conformity analysis to prove that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH EA.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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There is a problem with the proposed option with regard to CR2000 E. If CR2000 E. is replaced by a controlled access road, then more farmers will have difficulty moving farm equipment north and south. A ride service road would need to be constructed to accommodate north and south movement of farm equipment. If a controlled access road were to follow CR200 E, it would make sense for the controlled access road to lie to the immediate north side of the existing CR200 E. Otherwise, the cost of building a duplicate road of CR2000 E. would need to be added to the total cost for the corridor. Moreover, more precious farm land would be lost in the construction of a controlled access corridor that runs along CR2000 E. We were told during a public information meeting that the corridor will contain a passageway for bicycles. There appears to be more concern for bicycle riders than for farmers.

Response:

Existing CR 2000 East currently provides a north/south route for farm equipment. If Alternative 127 is selected as the Preferred Alternative, the loss of a section of CR 2000 East will impact travel times and increase adverse travel for farm equipment transport and other travel in that immediate area. CR 2100 East, approximately one mile east of CR 2000 East, could be an alternate route for this displaced traffic. However, if Alternative 127 is selected as the Preferred Alternative, a proposed access road along a portion of the east side of the ESH will be recommended that will extend north from Fort Jesse Road to provide connectivity to CR 2000 East.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (for new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing

Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). An expressway such as US 51 south of Bloomington has no advantages over a freeway option, given the number of interchanges that would be required per Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) policy. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This variance in speed would create an unsafe condition for motorists and could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

As part of the development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. Existing and planned bicycle accommodations were inventoried. The proposed multi-use path and ESH crossings are compatible with and complement the existing trail system and will support the planned future land uses in the ESH area. The multi-use path was developed with input from the Alternative Modes Focus Working Group (FWG), composed of local citizens.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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In my opinion, the preferred alternative is "no build". Alt 126 is much too close to subdivisions on the north end of Bloomington and both alternatives are just ½ mile from Towanda Barnes Rd and the south end. To gain efficiency, the roads should be further east, to move through traffic away from residences.

A huge is the amount of inaccessible farm acreage left behind (from both alternatives.) I understand the need to take acreage to build the road, but to leave these farmers with devaluated inaccessible farm parcels is not acceptable. If the committee strongly feels that much of the impacted acreage will be zoned residential or commercial by 2035, then that's another reason to build a road further east. There is no sense in building new structures that will be torn down. And if development along the proposed alternative is waited, then that encourages urban sprawl to the east.

Last but not least, Illinois is broke. Our state cannot adequately maintain the roads in existence, pay our bills or funds pensions adequately. The state has no business building an unnecessary east side highway in the current financial straits.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies

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The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

Landlocked agricultural parcels have been identified and reported in the alternatives analysis for the ESH. A Focus Working Group (FWG) consisting of farmers and agricultural representatives was formed to address issues of land use and access management. At the FWG meetings, input was sought on ways to address farm vehicle access and as a result, farm access roads are being proposed as part of the ESH to allow access to all nearby farm parcels.

Per Federal guidance, transportation planning activities must consider an area's existing land use patterns and future land use plans. It is acknowledged that land may be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that the road will provide. The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and therefore is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with the 2035 Land Use Plan to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl, or unplanned development, when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth, as well as McLean County's stated goal to preserve farmland. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alternatives that were inconsistent with this criterion (typically, alternatives located the farthest from the urban area) were eliminated from further consideration.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

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Sincerely,

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McLean County Engineer



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Just stop this. Do not waste any additional money on this horrible idea. The studies you've based this on are heavily out of date. East side growth where that been in the last 5 years. There is no growth and there won't be - Studies showing otherwise are based on the go-go days of the late 90's and early 2000's - completely useless and unrepresentative today. If you really need to destroy the environment and waste money, at least build a real bypass from Lexington to Leroy, not this boondoggle. Again, just stop.

Completely unnecessary and huge waste of money, based on studies completed in 2006. What east side growth? \$300 million so people can save 5 minutes? This is an idea that represents the absolute worst decision making I've seen. Please this boondoggle is a disgrace and an example of poor governance, in the extreme.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

An improvement between Lexington to Leroy was assessed early in the ESH planning process. Lexington-Leroy Road is a north-south route located approximately ten miles east of Bloomington-Normal and approximately five miles east of the eastern boundary of the urban development boundaries of the area's 2035 Land Use Plan. Based on the analysis of similar alternatives in the 2009 ESH Corridor Report, a Lexington-Leroy Road alternative would not adequately improve access to or mobility on the major roads in the study area and would not accommodate forecasted growth on the east side due to its distance from the eastern edge of the forecasted growth area. Therefore, an improved Lexington-Leroy Road could not meet the Purpose & Need of the project, and it was eliminated from further consideration.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

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Want alternative #127.

Why

- 1. Less residences effected*
- 2. Less businesses effected*
- 3. Allows more growth to the east.*
- 4. Follows road already in place.*

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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I live at Harvest Pointe. I am troubled by being called an insignificant impact. Even if my home is not slated for demolition, our environment and home value will be negatively impacted.

I definitively prefer 127, which will impact us less. My true preference would be for neither. Our subdivision is about 7 years old. Some of the home which would be directly impacted are in the process of being built right now.

I am concerned about traffic noise. One of the reasons we bought our homes was the quiet location.

With the current economic situation in the State, this project needs to be canceled.

Response:

The term "significant" has a specific meaning with regard to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In essence, significance in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity. "Context" means that the proposed impacts of an alternative are analyzed in several contexts that depend on the setting of the proposed action. "Intensity" refers to the severity of an impact. For a detailed definition of "significance" with respect to NEPA, please reference Section 1508.27 in the Council of Environmental Quality's (CEQ) *Regulations for Implementing NEPA*, available online.

Residential displacements or impacts are not trivial, as you note, and because of this, every effort is being made to minimize the number of current and future residences that will be impacted by the ESH. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process. The impacts of the remaining alternatives are lower than many of the other alternatives that were considered and eliminated during the alternatives analysis process. The term "insignificant" does not mean that the impact is not

important or seriously considered when evaluating alternatives. Because you have brought this to our attention, the project team will increase efforts to make ESH documents and public involvement materials "reader-friendly" by reducing this type of jargon so that the intended meaning of communications between the project team and the public is clear.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

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The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

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Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. Your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has also been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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127 would be more preference if there has to be a highway.

126 comes so close to our house that the impact on noise and home value will be considerable. I am troubled that our subdivision has "little" significance. Three of the homes are or have been built this summer. This will also, effect, our homes. We chose this area for its quiet and restful atmosphere. We are SIGNIFICANT!

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted.

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Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The term "significant" has a specific meaning with regard to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In essence, significance in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity. "Context" means that the proposed impacts of an alternative are analyzed in several contexts that depend on the setting of the proposed action. "Intensity" refers to the severity of an impact. For a detailed definition of "significance" with respect to NEPA, please reference Section 1508.27 in the Council of Environmental Quality's (CEQ) *Regulations for Implementing NEPA*, available online.

Residential displacements or impacts are not trivial, as you note, and because of this, every effort is being made to minimize the number of current and future residences that will be impacted by the ESH. Alternatives that resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process. The impacts of the remaining alternatives are lower than many of the other alternatives that were considered and eliminated during the alternatives analysis process. The term "insignificant" does not mean that the impact is not important or seriously considered when evaluating alternatives. Because you have brought this to our attention, the project team will increase efforts to make ESH documents and public involvement materials "reader-friendly" by reducing this type of jargon so that the intended meaning of communications between the project team and the public is clear.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not flown on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, because the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and update the proposed impacts accordingly. In order to be considered a residential displacement, the home must currently exist or be under construction. Five existing homes in Harvest Pointe subdivision are displaced by Alternative 126 and no homes in Harvest Pointe are displaced by Alternative 127. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and will be considered in the ESH Environmental Assessment.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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October 03, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I would like to go on the record and oppose both 126 and 127 options for East Side Highway locations. I have several concerns regarding the locations currently proposed – You are saying the highway is needed to address population growth of the city. There is not data that shows that the current major businesses have a long-term growth strategy in Bloomington, IL. Based on my research, the population growth over the next 10 years here in Bloomington, IL doesn't warrant a major highway.

The 'East Side Highway' will have major impact on numerous neighborhoods in its current proposed path. When we bought the house, we were looking for a quiet neighborhood to raise our kids in. The highway will destroy our chances. Historically, quality of residential life goes way down around new highway construction, especially if an on/off ramp is built right in the middle of our neighborhood.

I believe residential assessment hasn't been thoroughly enough. In the last public meeting, the officials had no idea that our neighborhood had more than 50 houses already built since 2008. They thought the number was more like 5/6 which reflects on their version of the residential map. Home values will go down as a result of the Q1, 2014 announcement that you are working towards. Home is the biggest asset for us and we invested a lot of money. It will be devastating to take the hit on our home values.

Some builders in our neighborhood are actively building houses directly in the path of option 126. I feel like building should be stopped until a decision is made. I feel like they are just trying to make their money and leave us to chances. This is not transparency. You should've taken better steps to deal with the impacts of the neighborhoods in the path of your options.

Historical growth data that you are basing your decision on is faulty. The growth will not be linear rather it will be based on major business's long-term growth strategy here in Bloomington, IL. I would like to see their 10 year plans. I would like to see you factor in their plans in your highway build decisions.

You can say that this helps 'Illinois Job Growth' initiative but the jobs will be short-term. The potential of losing the human resources as they will probably move to another state as a result of this highway impacting their neighborhood is far greater than short term construction and 'truck stop' jobs.

Children's development will be impacted as history shows neighborhoods around highways are prone to theft, vandalism and other crimes.

I urge that you further study the growth and need of the city and most importantly the need of its residents and then make the announcement. Residents make the city and not the other way around.

You can cite all the rules and regulations about the 'noise policy' but in your heart you know very well how noisy it will be around a major highway, especially close to an 'on/off ramp' in case of our neighborhood and option 126 plan.

There wasn't any highway needed for the last 15 year growth. I strongly believe it will not be needed for another 15 years. Towanda Barnes will be able to handle the 'so called' growth. If the primary purpose of the ESH is not to create a bypass then why do the highway, why not just improve the existing roads for much cheaper.

I fail to see the return on investment of this project.

I keep going back to the need of a 'credible growth rate' in conjunction with growth/expansion plans of the businesses before any decision is made or announced.

Lastly, if study dictates the need of ESH then please pick the 127 (Eastern Most) option.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Flights to obtain aerial images are not conducted on a monthly basis due to cost. Therefore, the aerial images shown in public meeting materials may not show all of the recently constructed homes on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. However, since the area continues to grow, the project team conducts regular field visits of the project area to gather data on the location of new homes, schools, parks, etc. and updates the proposed impacts accordingly. The future phases of the east side subdivisions are known and considered in the ESH project. The location of future parks and schools are noted in the analysis as well, in order to be considered in the ESH assessment.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

Historic trends generally show that communities, including residential areas, are typically enhanced by improved proximity to transportation facilities. The project team is not aware of any data to support the statement that people will move out of state due to the construction of a roadway.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project, and the priority of the FHWA, IDOT, and McLean County. A detailed safety evaluation of the Preferred Alternative will be included in the EA document. The type of facility considered for the ESH, a full access control freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools, residential areas, and parks will be evaluated in the EA. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies. Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

Using the existing local road network was considered during the ESH alternative development and analysis process. A Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and a Travel Demand Management (TDM) alternative were developed and evaluated. In general, the purpose of TSM/TDM strategies is to reduce the Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) within the study area, improve traffic flow, increase "through-put" and contribute to environmental conservation and sustainability benefits without any intensive capital investments. As documented in the Reasonable Range of Alternatives Memo, the analysis concluded that the TSM/TDM alternative would not accommodate the future unmet demand based on population and employment projections and the 2035 Land Use Plan, would not reduce traffic congestion in the study area to an acceptable level, and would not satisfy the project's purpose and need.

Several alternatives that utilize a portion of existing roads, including Towanda Barnes Road, CR 2000 E and CR 2100 E, were evaluated and included in the alternative analysis evaluation. Alternatives that utilize Towanda Barnes Road and CR 2100 E were eliminated during the alternative analysis process due to disproportionately high environmental and/or community impacts. Alternative 127 does follow the existing CR 2000 E alignment north of General Electric Road.

The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and improved mobility for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

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I prefer Alternative 127

After review of the Environmental Assessment EST, Alternative 127 is less impactful to the most important criteria. Farmland preservation should be considered least important when embarking on a Central Illinois project with 2035 in mind. Additionally, anticipated growth for 2035 would dictate "GO EAST!"

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the Environmental Assessment and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Minimizing all environmental impacts, including farm impacts, is a goal of the Environmental Assessment, but all resource impacts are balanced to achieve the best solution possible.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

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I prefer the "No Build Alternative" if possible. However if building cannot be avoided, I support "Alternative 127". "Avoidance of wetlands was of first importance in evaluating alternatives." (Page 7) Alternative 127 decreases the wetland impacts nearly 100% compared to alternative 126. (Page 5) Alternative 127 decreases all effect described in the EAES Table part 1 (Page 5). Alternative 127 allows for greater city expansion. Alternative 126 will greatly decrease property values and displace residents of Harvest Pointe, where residency has dramatically increased since the first four steps were presented on January 11, 2012.

I fear Alternative 126 will displace my family. Buying another home may be unrealistic since I no longer qualify as a "First time home buyer" and interest rates have increased since I purchased my home.

Thank you for listening

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the

November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The impacts of the alternatives on the Kickapoo Creek watershed have been considered during the alternatives analysis process for the ESH. Kickapoo Creek is an important water resource to be protected. Impacts considered included acres of wetlands affected, acres of floodplain affected, highly erodible soils, number of stream crossings, acres of riparian (or bank vegetation) affected, and the percentage impacted of the overall watershed. These impacts were considered cumulatively, and alignments with disproportionately high impacts were eliminated; none of the alignments carried forward for analysis in the ESH EA cross the main branch of Kickapoo Creek. Impacts to wetlands, watersheds, highly erodible soils, and water quality will be investigated in detail in the EA for the alignments remaining under consideration.

A Focus Working Group (FWG) composed of local citizens was formed to address how to incorporate sustainability in the ESH design and construction. iLAST, the Illinois Livable and Sustainable Transportation Rating System and Guide, was used with the FWG to identify preferred Best Management Practices (BMPs) to mitigate impacts. The incorporation of green infrastructure features such as filter strips, bioswales, meandering swales, infiltration basins, and native plantings will minimize potential effects of construction and storm water management upon streams.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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Our preference would be No highway. Noise and lower home values are our concern. If needed, we would prefer the highway and exit/entrance for Ireland Grove road to be east of Benjamin school, at County Rd 2000. Noise and pollution should be as far from the school as possible

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

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*The east side highway proposal as presented June 19, 2013 with Alternatives 126/127 should not be considered as an option to alleviate traffic concerns for future growth on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. **The NO BUILD OPTION** is the only option that is supported by the majority of residents of this community that are affected by this project directly. The proposal indicates that interstate standards will be the most efficient design for the project. With limited access due to ramp configuration this will actually limit access on either side of the roadway. One only has to look at the I55-I74 interstate on the west side of the community to realize that mobility when traveling east or west will be impacted. With the completion of 6 lanes on the current I55-I74 interstate it does not make any sense to add a by-pass to the east side of the community.*

Another issue that will be a problem for the proposed area will be the diagonal cuts through farmland that will limit access for farmers to access fields during the farming season. As well as making new north-south cuts through fields and dividing that land. This will add to the cost of farming the land and also large farm machinery will not be allowed on the type of road way being purposed. Further impacting the dollars generated by farming for McLean County.

Another issue will be the added noise pollution that will increase on the east-side because of large truck traffic that will use this road to keep from going around the west-side of the community. More commercial development will also take place at the interchanges which will also add to environmental issues and noise pollution. Just try and watch a football game at Normal West or a softball game at Champion Fields on the west and that is what it will be on the east side if this highway is built.

This proposal will not help with congestion on Veterans Parkway because of the proximity of the road and because businesses or employers currently on Veterans would not be relocating just because of a new interstate being built. It will however decrease property values in the corridor

area, impact current subdivisions that people have moved into because of quality of life choices and potentially keep people from being able to sale or develop their property because this may be built.

The option should be upgrading existing right-a-ways to connect I55 and I74 if necessary and the improvement of east-west roads to improve mobility. I am in favor of the NO BUILD OPTION. I believe this would be better for the community.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

There is a tendency to assume that because there is an Interstate roadway on the west side of Bloomington-Normal (I-55/I-74), and because the west side of the cities has developed slower than the east side, the Interstate highway is the direct cause of the slower growth. The primary cause of slower urban growth on the west side of Bloomington-Normal is the lack of sanitary sewer infrastructure. Much of the west side is downstream of the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District (BNWRD) sewage treatment plant on West Oakland Avenue. For this reason, pumping stations would be required to transport sewage. Additionally, the presence of Sugar Creek (and its tributaries) and railroad properties further stall west side development. The I-55/I-74 corridor has few interchanges on the west side, and therefore has less east-west connectivity and access to west side land, which is a factor in the area's slower growth, but the Interstate highway is not the primary cause of the slow growth.

The developed land on the east side of Bloomington-Normal lies within the service area of the West Oakland Avenue treatment plant. The undeveloped land on the east side of the cities is predominantly in the watershed of Kickapoo Creek and may be served by gravity to the BNWRD sewage treatment plant in Randolph Township, making development more feasible and less expensive.

As stated in the ESH Purpose and Need Statement, the purpose of the ESH is to "Provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from residential areas and job centers." The recommended facility type under consideration, a limited access freeway, will provide east-west connectivity by including interchanges at one to two-mile intervals (per IDOT guidelines) at the major crossroads of: I-74, US 150, Cheney's Grove Road, Ireland Grove Road (1200N), Illinois Route 9 (1400N), General Electric Road (1500N), Fort Jesse Road (1600N), Towanda Barnes Road (near 1800N), and I-55. There will be grade separations allowing east-west connectivity but no access to the ESH at Towanda Barnes Road (South of Cheney's Grove Road) and Oakland Ave (1300N).

Additionally, improvements to east-west roadways that are needed due to construction of the ESH will be included as part of the ESH project. The operations of these major east-west roads will be studied when the ESH Preferred Alternative undergoes detailed traffic modeling. East-west roadway improvements needed due to the ESH will be identified in the EA, and recommended for construction prior to or during construction of the ESH. And finally, pedestrians and bicyclists will also be able to cross ESH at all interchange locations and at other points along the ESH, via separated pathways.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

Impacts to agriculture have been considered throughout the alternative development and evaluation process. Alternatives were created by the public, Community Working Groups (CWG) composed of local citizens, and the

project team to parallel existing roads or farm tracts to the greatest extent possible taking into account avoidance of other features. Farm severances, access impacts, impacts to farm buildings, and adverse travel was minimized or avoided as much as possible when developing alignments; however, some diagonal severances could not be avoided. Diagonal severances affect farm operations and were carefully considered in the agricultural impact assessment. Additionally, some lateral farmland severances were created by the ESH along the sections that paralleled farm tract boundaries. These impacts, in addition to other agricultural impacts, were quantified and have been included in the alternatives analysis for the ESH. These impacts will again be calculated for the refined Preferred Alternative, and reported in the EA document.

The Project Study Group and CWG agreed to eliminate those alternatives that impacted the greatest number of agricultural acres and prime farmland. A Focus Working Group (FWG) consisting of farmers and agricultural representatives was formed to address issues of land use and access management. At the FWG meetings, input was sought on ways to address farm vehicle access and as a result, farm access roads are being proposed as part of the ESH to allow access to all nearby farm parcels.

Farm vehicles will be prohibited from using the ESH due to IDOT safety policies. IDOT does not allow slow-moving vehicles, such as farm vehicles, to travel on freeway facilities because they travel much slower than the rest of freeway traffic, creating safety concerns due to speed differential. Access to farm parcels has been inventoried for the project area, and has been verified where possible with members of the public and the project's Land Use and Access Management FWG. Access to farm parcels will be maintained where possible. Where existing access to farm parcels is eliminated due to the ESH, access roads or new access from public roads to those farms will be constructed as part of the ESH. Farm vehicles will also be accommodated over ESH along the proposed bridges.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Using the existing local road network was considered during the ESH alternative development and analysis process. A Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and a Travel Demand Management (TDM) alternative were developed and evaluated. In general, the purpose of TSM/TDM strategies is to reduce the Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) within the study area, improve traffic flow, increase "through-put" and contribute to environmental conservation and sustainability benefits without any intensive capital investments. As documented in the Reasonable Range of Alternatives Memo, the analysis concluded that the TSM/TDM alternative would not

accommodate the future unmet demand based on population and employment projections and the 2035 Land Use Plan, would not reduce traffic congestion in the study area to an acceptable level, and would not satisfy the project's purpose and need.

Several alternatives that utilize a portion of existing roads, including Towanda Barnes Road, CR 2000 E and CR 2100 E, were evaluated and included in the alternative analysis evaluation. Alternatives that utilize Towanda Barnes Road and CR 2100 E were eliminated during the alternative analysis process due to disproportionately high environmental and/or community impacts. Alternative 127 does follow the existing CR 2000 E alignment north of General Electric Road.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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October 3, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

My wife and I remain vehemently opposed to the construction of the East Side Highway. We live in The Grove neighborhood and we have serious concerns about the increased noise and traffic that would come with the proposed freeway. This would very negatively impact the quality of life in our neighborhood and others like it on the east side of Bloomington. Our firm support is behind the no-build option.

We do not support either option 126 or 127. Both options would effectively isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city of Bloomington. Our neighborhood is the only territory within the city limits that is left "outside the line" created by this road. We feel this violates the screening criterion to not "divide or isolate a neighborhood or community."

Furthermore, the number of proposed interchanges in these options is excessive. There are 8 total interchanges – 6 if you count just those in between interstates I-55 and I-74. Compare that to the interstate system on the west side of town, which has just 2 – Market Street and Veterans Parkway. Similarly consider the north side of town, which also has 2 – Veterans Parkway and Main Street, or the south side which has just 1 – Main Street. Having an interchange at virtually every east-west road on the east side of town is unnecessary and we are strongly opposed to the proposal of an exit at Ireland Grove Road. This will increase the traffic and noise on this road, to which our back yard is directly adjacent.

While we do not support either option 126 or 127, we feel 126 is the lesser of two evils as its path is the furthest distance from our neighborhood. However, again, our support is fully behind the no-build option.

Thank you for your consideration.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 126 over Alternative 127 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH will also relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. This study will identify east-west routes that need to be improved to accommodate increased volume that would occur as a result of the ESH. Recommendations regarding east-west arterial street improvements will be included in the final report.

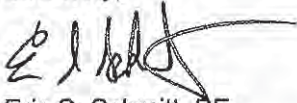
The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community (Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)." Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the

definitions and guidelines set forth in the IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual. Subdivisions near the ESH, including the Grove, do meet the definition of a neighborhood; however the remaining alternatives do not divide the neighborhood into two sections or isolate the neighborhood from community services. Residents of the Grove will still have access to community services via Ireland Grove Road. Emergency response personnel for Bloomington- Normal have indicated that the ESH will help reduce emergency response times on the east side.

Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following IDOT's freeway interchange spacing standards. The location of interchanges was based on traffic volumes and input from the Community Working Groups (CWG) and Project Study Group (PSG). Diamond interchanges were initially proposed to reduce interchange footprint size. Where a standard diamond interchange impacted an environmental resource (e.g., home, public facility, or wetland), other types of interchange configurations were considered if the configuration could avoid or minimize impacts to the resource. For instance, a diamond interchange was initially proposed at Ireland Grove, but many residents of the Grove expressed concern that the interchange ramp in the northeast quadrant would be too close to the subdivision. As a result, the project team revised the interchange type to a partial cloverleaf, eliminating the ramp in the northeast quadrant and adding an extra 500 foot buffer between the interchange and the Grove subdivision.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

If you absolutely must do this, I vote for ALT 127 because it has the least amount of impact on homes. No one needs a new interstate put in a "backyard". 127 will at least help a few homeowners. I strongly oppose this project.

I feel the whole thing is ridiculous. This is way too expensive and unneeded. If you really think this is needed, go further east connect between Downs & LeRoy and go down CR 2100 or 2300 to reduce impact on homes. Our quiet and beautiful lifestyle is at stake. This is why we moved out there. We do not need extra highway noise.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. Your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has also been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the

November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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I do not like either 126 or 127 but if it must be I would go with 126. 127 is just a little closer to my farm. Will all this construction delay me from getting to work on time?

If there is no money for the road will it be become the bridge to nowhere? So now I am between this road on west and the pipe line on the east. We do not want to stay as farm land and want to sell for a subdivision in the future but fear with a freeway between us and town this will not happen.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 126 over Alternative 127 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to some residential areas than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the

project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Access during construction to properties within or contiguous to the project alignment is something that is addressed in the Phase II (Detailed Engineering) stage of an improvement (after the EA is completed). It is the policy of all of the transportation agencies (local, state, and federal) involved in this study to maintain access to all commercial properties (including schools) during construction. If this project is built, the assigned construction engineer will work with all affected properties to ease the inconveniences necessitated by construction.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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We are not in support of either proposed corridor for the following reasons:

- **Environmental Impact:** *Both of the proposed corridors will negatively impact the peace and enjoyment we currently have at the home we constructed in 2008. We are planning to retire from our careers at the areas largest employer this year and had planned to live out our lives in the quiet country neighborhood (Dover Ridge)
. I believe our house is just outside the 500ft noise area considered by the highway but common sense indicates that noise from an expressway class highway travels much longer distances and since the prevailing winds are from south and west during warmer periods of the year. The noise impact to us is not acceptable us.*
- **Projected Growth:** *as an employees in the IT department of the largest employer in Bloomington we were informed this past week that employment numbers for the largest department (IT Systems) will be smaller in the coming years as all growth will be targeted at the 3 metro locations of Atlanta, Dallas, and Phoenix where the company has significant construction underway. These facts lead us to question the data being used to support the need for a highway. If the largest employer is not going to be growing and we all know Illinois in general is not a good environment for business it seems more likely that Bloomington's growth will not be near the projected figures.*
- **Sustainability:** *Governmental responsibility for existing highways and bridges is not able to adequately maintain our existing inventory of highways and bridges. In such an economic time it is not prudent to take on the additional costs to build a new highway we cannot afford to maintain.*

- **Community backing for the Highway:** the 2012 McLean County Regional Transportation plan (page 39) indicates only 21% support completion of the highway with several other projects listed as much higher priority. Given the sparse support, we do not think either corridor is desired or supported by the community. Sustaining our existing infrastructure is of much greater concern to our community at large as indicated by the survey contained in the regional plan.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

There is only one viable option for this proposed East Side Highway, and that option is NO BUILD. Do not waste any more time and money on this boondoggle. The roads that are there meet the traffic needs. There are thousands of miles of roads that need to be resurfaced in this town already that are in deplorable condition. Stop the Road. It is not needed now. We are against this nonsense. Stop the waste of time. Do not build the highway.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic

within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 02, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

I prefer the no build option. That way there is no land taken out of production, no noise and pollution bothering the current and future residence. Currently, Towanda Barnes Rd. serves the need for a North-South road. This road could be developed if needed but wait until the population grows before any new road anywhere on the East side is built. It looks like a huge waste of money for a road that nobody wants or needs.

We moved to the Grove from out of the State 5 years ago and did not know anything about this road development. We chose to live there because it is quiet and there is no big highway near by. Our neighbors who just move in still are uninformed about this potential project.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that the Environmental Assessment (EA) consider many potential impacts of an alternative, such as traffic noise, community impacts, wetlands, water quality, threatened and endangered species, visual impacts, agricultural impacts, and changes in air quality. Per NEPA, environmental impacts should be avoided or minimized when feasible. Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. NEPA does not require an agency to select the environmentally preferable alternative or prohibit adverse environmental effects. Agencies may have other policy considerations to take into account in the decision-making process, such as social, economic, or technical interests. NEPA does require that an agency be informed of the environmental consequences of their decision.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Predicted air quality resulting from a roadway project is compared to Air Quality Standards set by the USEPA. The standards, set for six pollutants, are set at concentration levels designed to protect public health. If the standards are not met an area is called "non-attainment" and air quality is required to be improved. The study area meets the air quality standards for all six pollutants for which the USEPA has set standards: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. McLean County is listed as an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Additionally, impacts due to Mobile Source Air Toxics are discussed in the Environmental Assessment document.

In addition, the Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by the McLean County Regional Plan Commission must undergo a conformity analysis to prove that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan. Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT) policies will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
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(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

My bedroom will be right next to the highway. Bye see you later


Don't build it!

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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I don't understand why we must do this at all. Since we do, I think you should pursue alternative 127. It looks to me as if almost all the results of your study affects or points to 127. Farmland does have a slight edge toward using 126. However I can't see it offsetting the reset of the results. Also I feel the probability is high for the land of be developed in the 127 ALT. if 126 were selected.

I live in Harvest Pointe it is a new subdivision. Houses have really started to go up. It would be a shame form people buying new houses only to see the value of their houses go down because of a highway that won't be built for years.-Thank you

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the

ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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October 2, 2013

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Clark-Dietz –

I am in complete opposition to the building of the East Side Highway. However, it seems as though any opposition stated has repeatedly fallen upon deaf ears. To the extent the freeway will be built anyway, then I vote for Proposal 127, the more easterly route.

For obvious reasons, there is much resistance to the East Side Highway along the eastern edge of Bloomington. In addition, the reasons stated by Clark-Dietz in support of the ESH are nebulous and don't ring true:

- For local residents to use (?)*
- To alleviate traffic on E-W streets (I live on the East side and wouldn't use it to get to the West side)*
- To alleviate traffic on Veterans (commuters / commercial use of Veterans is minimal)*
- To control urban sprawl (?)*
- To prepare for the expansion of Bloomington in the future – estimates of future growth seem overstated*

I'm thinking that some "real" arguments in favor of the ESH might include:

- CIRA expansion – make it attractive to shipping airlines because of easier access*
- May draw larger airlines to CIRA, increasing its competitiveness with Peoria and Champaign*
- Could help make Bloomington more business friendly*
- More business might stimulate economic growth*

*The problem here, is that the second set of reasons is never discussed. If these **are** the reasons, then you and the city and county leaders need to say so, and not tiptoe around this. The residents of the East Side are reasonable people (for the most part). This project might get less resistance if we could hear some reasonable arguments rather than the first ridiculous set of reasons. The project hits people where they live – so emotions will run high.*

There will be some significant liability exposure to the builders, realtors, and the City of Bloomington for failure to disclose the possibility of a freeway running adjacent to or through a new neighborhood. I would recommend you calculate that into the cost of this project.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH also will relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Per Federal guidance, transportation planning activities must consider an area's existing land use patterns and future land use plans. It is acknowledged that land may be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the

enhanced access that the road will provide. The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and therefore is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with the 2035 Land Use Plan to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl, or unplanned development, when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth, as well as McLean County's stated goal to preserve farmland. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alternatives that were inconsistent with this criterion (typically, alternatives located the farthest from the urban area) were eliminated from further consideration.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

Economic development is not the purpose of the ESH project and is not included in the Purpose and Need. CIRA is and will continue to be a major traffic generator and economic engine on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. CIRA is not the main driver of this project; it is one of many traffic generators/destinations included as part of the study.

Since the beginning of the Corridor Study in 2006, the community and the project team has conducted stakeholder outreach activities in order to engage the public and notify them of the project. Meeting notifications were placed in the local newspaper, advertisements were read over the radio, and newsletters which included meeting notifications were mailed to all stakeholders on the ESH mailing list. A project website was established in 2010, and newsletters were also placed in public facilities (e.g., libraries) in the study area. If you or someone you know wishes to join the mailing list, please forward the contact information to the project team and you will be notified of upcoming meetings. All people who signed in at a public meeting and included their contact information were added to the mailing list. The project team is required by law to send letters via certified mail to properties directly impacted by the Preferred Alternative prior to the public hearing, which will tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2014.

In addition, the location of the ESH Corridor is shown in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan (November 2009), as well as the Normal and Bloomington Comprehensive Plans. These documents are available to the public via the Internet, and at various locations in McLean County. The ESH Corridor shown in the comprehensive plans was based on the 2009 ESH Corridor Study; the current remaining alternatives have been refined since the Corridor Study and follow a new alignment for portions of the corridor.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
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October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Hello,

I am a resident of Harvest point () and I strongly oppose to both options (Alternative 126 and Alternative 127). This highway would have a negative impact in our neighborhood, value of homes, children and the city. I my wife

If one option cannot be avoided, I would prefer Alternative 127

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose

and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs.

The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and improved mobility for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



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October 02, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Neither Alternative is needed in our opinion. Bloomington / Normal is not a huge population area that warrants destroying quality farm land and disruption existing homes, schools and already established subdivisions.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



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McLean County Engineer



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October 2, 2013

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Thank you for sending this notice about the meeting Wed. I certainly plan to attend.

I moved from Bloomington to the peacefulness of the country and live

I have concerns about the project. Can you tell me:

- 1. When will work on this project begin?*
- 2. Why not use Towanda-Barnes Rd?*
- 3. What will this cost and who pays for it?*
- 4. Is it worth it just to save a few minutes in travel time?*

I just hate to see good farmland be "destroyed" for a highway. One of the options practically goes through the back door of one of my neighbors. That would be a total shame for him and any other farmers in the area.

Thank you.

Response:

At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) are not yet funded. One of the reasons for performing the Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of funding for construction has not

been determined. Construction funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects, some State funds are available, and some funding may come from the County or cities.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility being considered, a full access control freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility while reducing crash potential.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential areas than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Sincerely,


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McLean County Engineer



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October 2, 2013

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I can appreciate the immense and comprehensive study. However I have concerns and comments.

- *Rt 127 – Doesn't make sense form travelers coming from Downs has to go 2 miles further west and 2 miles east to get to 2000 E. Is this for convenience of State Farm or connect 74 to I55?*
- *Any consideration given to LeRoy-Lexington blacktop?*
- *There is already a bypass around west of B_N. Another?*
- *Is 127 at ground level or over 2000 E? How are royal Kraft and I to get home? Dale Sutter? Everyone east on 1800 Rd?*
- *There is so much farm equipment form farmers field on 2000 E. How are they to get to their fields? Their field may not be accessible frmom2100 or any other way.*
- *There was mention of flight patterns you have to avoid. Planes go right over my place all the times daily.*
- *If 127 will 2000 E. Be access or frontage road (like Rt. 66 to I55)? Was Rt. 66 considered? Could have tied in freeway north of Menards no home or business. Historic or save farmland?*
- *Two Towanda exit? Great expense when interchange already exists!*
- *Field visits? No ONE visited me at any time.*
- *Important farmland owned for generations is important. Land owners don't necessarily do the farming. Do you know who the farmers are? Adverse travel and access change indeed!*
- *Funds From?*
- *This all makes me wonder if veterans' should have been a freeway with exit ramps. Hind sight on that.*

Response:

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

An improvement between Lexington to Leroy was assessed early in the ESH planning process. Lexington-Leroy Road is a north-south route located approximately ten miles east of Bloomington-Normal and approximately five miles east of the eastern boundary of the urban development boundaries of the area's 2035 Land Use Plan. Based on the analysis of similar alternatives in the 2009 ESH Corridor Report, a Lexington-Leroy Road alternative would not adequately improve access to or mobility on the major roads in the study area and would not accommodate forecasted growth on the east side due to its distance from the eastern edge of the forecasted growth area. Therefore, an improved Lexington-Leroy Road could not meet the Purpose & Need of the project, and it was eliminated from further consideration.

Existing CR 2000 East currently provides a north/south route for farm equipment. If Alternative 127 is selected as the Preferred Alternative, the loss of a section of CR 2000 East will impact travel times and increase adverse travel for farm equipment transport and other travel in that immediate area. CR 2100 East, approximately one mile east of CR 2000 East, could be an alternate route for this displaced traffic. However, if Alternative 127 is selected as the Preferred Alternative, a proposed access road along a portion of the east side of the ESH will be recommended that will extend north from Fort Jesse Road to provide connectivity to CR 2000 East.

Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) freeway interchange spacing standards. The location of interchanges was based on traffic volumes and input from the Community Working Groups (CWG) and Project Study Group (PSG).

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
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I prefer neither route. Neither of these routes really meet our needs. The process is skewed to produce the desired results. I know – I was a member of the citizens Community Working Group. I have attached a written set of comments for this project. When will you listen to what the people want? Tons of time effort and money are being spent to make sure there are no environmental impacts – what about the impacts to the citizens and the taxpayers? No one is listening to them.

The main points against this project are:

- 1) Most (all) people do not think there is a need for a new highway – especially being so close to Towanda Barnes road.*
- 2) Noise pollution will be bad for homes stuck near the highway. People moved to these eastern subdivisions to get away from highway and city noise. Go out to Normal's Champion fields or Maxwell Park fields and sit in the bleachers and listen to the highway noise – that is what it will sound like in our backyards and living rooms 24 / 7 / 365. Would you want that in your backyard?*
- 3) Decreased property values due to proximity to a highway will damage homeowner's property values and reduce revenues for the city.*
- 4) Where the highway should be located depends upon what kind of highway (interstate-like, limited access, broader access, etc.) is built. In general, the more interstate-like the road, the further east it should be.*
- 5) Towanda / Barnes road was there before the city grew before the city grew to the east. It is only gaining traffic due to people moving along and east of it. People did not drive out to it then north or south and then back into town. Likewise, this new road will not appreciably alleviate N/S traffic on the roads to the west of it. It will only be used by people who live near to or outside of it.*

- 6) *Making it limited access will further reduce its use by residents (also see #5) making it primarily a bypass of Bloomington/Normal.*
- 7) *The estimated cost of around 300 million dollars is a waste for the proposed value. The state is broke, the federal government is broke, and the city and county are poor financially. Our infrastructure and roads are crumbling. How can we consider building new roads when we can't take care of the bridges and roads we already have? Just because money would come "from the government" does not help. We are not stupid: "from the government" means from us through taxes and fees.*
- 8) *Population growth estimates are proving to be way off. The East Side Highway county website touts high growth in Bloomington and McLean County however that data is over 7 years old. Population growth rates have slowed significantly. According to The Business Journal (<http://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/on-numbers/scott-thomas/2012/04/houston-pushes-higher-in-metro.html?appSession=419119136841299>) growth in the Bloomington/Normal metropolitan area from 2010 to 2012 was only 2.08% - precipitously down from the 15.7% 6 year growth rate shown on the East Side Highway website. That means that the basis for the need for this highway is wrong.*
- 9) *In general, a new major road should be placed much further east than what they are mainly considering (looking at the current major north/south roads in Bloomington starting at Mitsubishi Parkway and going east (to Interstate 55, then Main Street, Veterans Parkway, and Towanda/Barnes Road), they are all about 1.75 miles apart, so this road should be about 1.75 miles east of Towanda/Barnes).*

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The Community Working Group (CWG) and Focus Working Groups (FWGs) were formed as part of the Context Sensitive Solutions process. A consensus of CWG and FWG member concurrence is sought prior to project decisions. Consensus is defined as a majority of stakeholders in agreement with the minority agreeing that their input was duly considered. The joint lead agencies and the Project Study Group (PSG) have and will continue to fully consider all CWG and FWG input when making project decisions. While it is not always reasonable to assume all CWG or FWG members will be in agreement, consensus was achieved on the major project milestones (purpose and need, range of alternatives, facility type) as discussed at the meetings. The project team does acknowledge that not all CWG and FWG members are in agreement on every project decision, but the project team and PSG did consider all input.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does

not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factor

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (for new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, provides moderate mobility at moderate speeds, and incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control). An expressway such as US 51 south of Bloomington has no advantages over a freeway option, given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This variance in speed would create an unsafe condition for motorists and could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH also will relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The

increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option.

The ESH is not intended as a bypass. The purpose of the proposed ESH is to serve both local and regional travel, increase mobility, and enhance transportation options on the east side with an emphasis on serving forecasted/expected growth in the Bloomington-Normal area. The ESH has direct access via interchanges at all major east-west arterial roads.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in late 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705

(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

No Build alternative is my preferred alternative. I mistakenly thought the East Side Highway was to expedite traffic from I-55 to I-74. I found out it is primarily for potential development on the east side. I feel alternatives 126 and 127 are a waste of money. With limited money available for roads, I would rather see Towanda-Barnes road connected to I-55 and I-74 with an expressway from substantially less money and impact on the farms, homes and the environment. I will pass this along to my elected officials and encourage them to not fund either alternative 126 or 127, but to fund a scaled-down proposal as I proposed above.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Widening Towanda Barnes Road was included in the range of alternatives but resulted in disproportionately high impacts to residences, commercial buildings, and parks when compared to the other alternatives under consideration. Even if Towanda Barnes Road were constructed to six lanes from Towanda (I-55) to I-74, the

traffic congestion forecasted for 2035 would not be relieved without a facility like the ESH. Thus, alternatives using Towanda Barnes Road were eliminated during the alternatives analysis process.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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To whom it may concern:

We purchased our home in August 2013 with one of the big factors being it is a relatively quiet, remote neighborhood.

When I learned of the possibility of an East Side Bypass being made under option 126 I was very disturbed being that the traffic noise level would greatly increase, some of the homes in our subdivision would be "wiped out", and our neighborhood's property values would greatly diminish. I prefer (as well as several of my neighbors) that an East Side Bypass not be constructed. If an East Side Bypass is constructed, I urge you to consider option 127 over option 126 - while I am not in favor of either option...at the very least option 127 will be the better of the 2 in terms of congestion, noise level, and the "sparing" of a few family's residences.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the

November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.


The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

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Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

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I am against either of the proposed alternative and would vote for "No Build" option. However, since we are forced to select one option, I would select alternative 127.

Alternative 126 has much more deeper impact on community, infrastructure, business and cost for outstanding homes in which one of in mine. Cost of homes near the highway 126 will significantly drop as soon as its selected to build. That will impact large amount of families with kids, business. Alternative 126 will be very close to the well-established subdivisions and passed thru one of the subdivision (Harvest Pointe) which will impact many families.

"NO BUILD" – YES

"ALT 126" – NO

"ALT 127" – NO (May be only if we have no choice)

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the

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Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan.

The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

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Sincerely,

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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October 2, 2013

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My family would prefer Alternative 127. This puts the freeway and any commercial development it may bring further away from an established residential area, park and potential elementary school.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and is therefore expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the project is to accommodate managed growth, as described in the McLean County Regional Planning Commission 2035 Land Use Plan. Alternatives have been considered based on their ability to meet this goal, and alternatives that were not consistent with this goal were eliminated.

Please refer to the 2035 Land Use Plan developed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission for the proposed 2035 land uses in the project area at http://www.mcplan.org/egov/documents/1342739612_12279.pdf. It is anticipated that the 2035 Land Use Plan will be modified to include the ESH Preferred Alternative once Phase I Engineering and the EA for the ESH are complete.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

The ESH is being designed per Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) safety standards. There is no specific distance identified in any regulation or guideline that the project team is aware of in which a school must be distanced from a freeway, unless a local ordinance has been established to indicate such. There are, however, proximity and indirect impacts that will be considered in the EA. The EA will include the evaluation of all existing schools and schools that have been incorporated into area comprehensive plans. The EA cannot take into account structures that are not officially planned.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, FHWA, and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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We favor Eastside Highway Alternative #127 and the construction of a Multi-Use Path. We prefer this alternative because it is the father east and would thus allow more development east of Towanda Barnes Road.

Additionally, we have the following caveats with our choice of Eastside Highway Alternative #127:

- Cloverleaf interchanges should be used for linkage to I-55 in the north and I-74 in the south. All other interchanges should diamond interchanges, with stop signs to all east/west roads.*
- In order to preserve our most valuable farmland, the number of interchanges should be reduced. The interchanges at General Electric Road and Cheney's Grove Road should be eliminated. These interchanges are too close their accompanying north and sloth interchange. If future development occurs along the east extensions of Hamilton Road and General Electric road, the addition of these interchanges can be addressed at that time.*

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 127 has been noted.

Interchange configurations were developed at the intersections of primary east-west routes following Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) freeway interchange spacing standards. The location of interchanges was based on traffic volumes and input from the Community Working Group (CWG) composed of local citizens and Project Study Group (PSG). Diamond interchanges were initially proposed to reduce interchange footprint size.

Where a standard diamond interchange impacted an environmental resource (e.g., home, public facility, or wetland), other types of interchange configurations were considered if the configuration could avoid or minimize impacts to the resource. For instance, a diamond interchange was initially proposed at Ireland Grove, but many residents of the Grove expressed concern that the interchange ramp in the northeast quadrant would be too close to the subdivision. As a result, the project team revised the interchange type to a partial cloverleaf, eliminating the ramp in the northeast quadrant and adding an extra 500 foot buffer between the interchange and the Grove subdivision.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. IDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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McLean County Engineer



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This continues to be addressed and if I am not mistaken the people of McLean County have spoken.

This is totally not necessary! The existing route has been upgraded to 3-lanes north and south 55/74 and is more than sufficient for traveling.

If this was ever to be considered, it should have been done years and years ago. Do you or whomever is studying this plan not realize the value of McLean County soil?!! There has already been too much taken away now with all the subdivisions and new roads.

It is time to stop the loss of Prime Farm Ground, and start looking at inner-city and existing buildings.

So please hear what people are saying and STOP this issue NOW.

Response:

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that

network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth.

The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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To whom it may concern,

I have several concerns regarding the development of an East Side Highway at the locations currently proposed:

The current alternatives are very near east side residential neighborhoods and the planned new park on the east side of the Eagle View South neighborhood. Considering the extremely close proximity, an interstate-type highway will increase child safety concerns, crime potential, noise pollution, and decrease property values for the neighborhoods in Towanda, Eagle View, and The Grove. Homes could be as close as ~350 feet from the new highway.

The population and traffic growth estimates seem aggressive considering the current growth plans for businesses in Bloomington-Normal. The major driver of employment in town, State Farm, has recently made public announcements about its intent to expand employee count in cities like Dallas, Atlanta, and Phoenix. The Bloomington State Farm employee count is expected to decline from peak levels and then remain flat over a lengthy period of time. Has this planning been taken into account for the growth plans that are spurring the Eastside Highway? Even if growth met estimates, wouldn't a non-Interstate type road (i.e. another Towanda Barnes) alleviate traffic congestion and provide for both residential and commercial friendly development? An Interstate could choke future residential growth to the east.

The Bloomington-Normal road system currently has major north/south routes spaced every 1.75-2.50 miles apart (I-55/74, Main Street, Veterans Parkway, Towanda Barnes Road). It seems that this pattern has worked well for the city. That would imply that the next north/south route should be 1.75-2.50 miles east of Towanda Barnes Road, much further than the current alternatives. The decline in property values of several neighborhoods due to an interstate highway could harm

property tax revenues that contribute to school budgets and road maintenance. The budgets of all levels of government will likely be strained for years, if not decades to come. This type of project is not the best use of government spending.

When my family chose to build a new house in the Eagle View neighborhood, we were looking for a quiet, child friendly, safe neighborhood to build our "dream" house that we could raise our children in. Now that we have two young children, our increased need for the neighborhood to remain safe and family friendly is a top concern. We love living in this neighborhood as it is close to work, daycare, parks, etc. I would have never imagined us building our home here if we knew there was the potential for an interstate running through our backyard. I am not in favor of the current proposed alternatives nor the type of road proposed. If a decision must be made between the two alternatives, I believe that alternative 127 would be the preferred alternative due to its smaller impact on residential displacement and its further distance from residential neighborhoods and parks. Impact on people's homes should be the primary consideration in evaluating the alternatives. Thank you for your time.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The remaining alignments are in closer proximity to residential subdivisions than some of the previously eliminated alignments; however, the remaining alignments have been found to result in fewer cumulative environmental, community, and agricultural impacts. These alternatives are more consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project in that they provide needed access to existing and future development on the east side of Bloomington-Normal and will accommodate projected traffic increases from projected increases in population and employment. Residential displacements and proximity to existing and planned residential areas were considered when planning the ESH. Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors.

Safety is an important component of any transportation project, and the priority of the FHWA, IDOT, and McLean County. A detailed safety evaluation of the Preferred Alternative will be included in the Environmental Assessment document. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The type of facility considered for the ESH, a full access control freeway, is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes and improve mobility while reducing crash potential. Proximity impacts to schools, residential areas, and parks will be evaluated in the EA. The project team is not aware of any studies correlating the construction of an ESH-type facility and increased crime in residential areas. The ESH will be designed with the safety of its users and its neighbors in mind.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

Generally, research has not yielded any definitive property value impacts from transportation projects. National research has found that property value benefits may occur for those living near a transportation facility that provides reduced travel times and increased accessibility. The impact of the ESH on property values may vary depending on the location of the property in proximity to the project. It is anticipated that property values in the ESH area could be influenced by changes in land use that are projected in the 2035 Land Use Plan. Increased urbanization could have property value benefits or impacts, depending on land use type and market factors. Historic trends generally show that communities, including residential areas, are enhanced by proximity to transportation facilities. The east side has seen an increase in residential development in the past several decades and is forecasted to continue to grow based on projected employment and population increases. This growth will result in an increased demand for travel to and from Bloomington-Normal job and commercial centers.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated.

Independent of State Farm, the Bloomington-Normal area is expected to grow in other industries, such as higher education services, and the two cities currently are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau). The project team has reached out to State Farm to solicit their comments on the ESH project, and to discuss their future transportation system needs.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (for new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control), but when modeled with projected 2035 traffic it results in similar congestion conditions as existing Veterans Parkway. An expressway such as US 51 south of Bloomington has no advantages over a freeway option, given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This variance in speed would create an unsafe condition for motorists and could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
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October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Since I was not able to attend the Public Information Meeting about the East Side Highway on June 19, 2013, I am submitting my comments about the preferred alternative by email.

Of the three alternatives, #126, #127, and No Build, I strongly prefer the No Build Alternative.

The East Side Highway is not needed. There is not enough north-south traffic now nor in the foreseeable future, to warrant the money, displacement of persons, land, and buildings, and cutting-off of farms and communities that would result from the highway to warrant its being built. The population, employment and land-use projections to 2035 used to justify its construction are flawed and based on an unlikely continuation of current trends. The land-use projections of the McLean County 2035 Comprehensive plans assume "business-as-usual" sprawl, which the East Side Highway would aggravate. There are many other ways to encourage compact development with alternative transportation and in fill. If some additional highway capacity is needed on the east-side of Bloomington-Normal, it should be east-west, not north-south. An East Side Freeway is not needed.

The No-Build Alternative would destroy far fewer (even no) agriculture land, farm buildings and residences, and businesses than either alternatives 126 or 127. Less travel would be affected and much less new pavement and new right-of way would be required than either other alternative. There are so many other ways to address transit on the east-side of Bloomington-Normal than a monstrous, expensive, and destructive freeway.

Please choose the NO BUILD alternative to the East Side Freeway.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) that have no stake in the ESH project. Based on the revised forecasts, there is a continued need to plan for the ESH project. Independent of the ESH project, population and traffic are predicted to increase within the study area. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

Per Federal guidance, transportation planning activities must consider an area's existing land use patterns and future land use plans. It is acknowledged that land may be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that the road will provide. The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and therefore is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with the 2035 Land Use Plan to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl, or unplanned

development, when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth, as well as McLean County's stated goal to preserve farmland. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alternatives that were inconsistent with this criterion (typically, alternatives located the farthest from the urban area) were eliminated from further consideration.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Schmitt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer

Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

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October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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*I understand that building the East Side Highway is still being considered. With **all** the opposition to this Highway, I cannot understand why building it is even thought of any more. The **ONLY** viable alternative is **NOT** to build it at all. We don't need #126 or #127. We need **NOT** to build any new highway. We have perfectly satisfactory highways on the East Side already.*

*We do not need an East Side Highway, **not now, not ever**. Climate change is already here, and our world has only begun to be greatly impacted by it. Fossil fuels and building highways add carbon to our environment. We need to be moving rapidly in the opposite direction if we are going to have a more sustainable world--a world we can live in and keep on living in. Suburban sprawl is obsolete, as is our dependence upon the automobile. Why can't we plan for the world which is coming, perhaps soon, instead of keeping on with business-as-usual ideas which completely ignore current and future realities?*

*Over many years already, hundreds and hundreds of citizens have voiced their fervent wishes that no East Side Highway be built, with hundreds and hundreds of reasons given. **PLEASE LISTEN TO US!** Nothing we say or do seems to have any impact whatsoever. The plans for an East Side Highway, which long since should have been dead and buried, keep rising again and again, like a phoenix from the ashes. These developers want this highway, and want to make all kinds of money because of this highway. But some things are much more important than money. For example: **LIFE**. Keep the farmland, we need to feed people. **HISTORY**: keep the land in the families that have owned it for generations. **INTEGRITY**: listen to the people, and don't take people's money to build what they do not want. I could go on and on, but what is the use, if the powers that be will not listen? This lack of response to longstanding public commentary is a travesty. We didn't want another road, nor a highway, and certainly not a freeway.*

NO East Side Highway. No, No, and again NO. Lay the whole idea to rest, and give it a peaceful and permanent burial.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the study area forecasted for Year 2035. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options and a No Build option. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. It is prudent to identify the best location for an ESH before the development, and subsequent traffic increase, occurs. Waiting for the forecasted development to occur and then determining a best location for the ESH would result in greater impacts to homes and businesses.

A detailed traffic model for the entire Bloomington-Normal urbanized area was developed using Citilabs Cube Voyager modeling software. Separate models were then created for each of the remaining alternatives. Input for the models include existing population and employment centers, existing local and regional traffic volumes and travel patterns (refined through driver surveys conducted in later 2010), forecasted population and employment growth, and forecasted residential & commercial growth as identified in the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan for McLean County. The most current census data and socioeconomic forecasts have been incorporated, and future growth rates are refined based upon these trends. From these models it is determined that the ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

As part of the roadway development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use

bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. A multi-use bicycle and pedestrian path is being proposed as part of the ESH project. The path is proposed adjacent to the ESH facility.

Per Federal guidance, transportation planning activities must consider an area's existing land use patterns and future land use plans. It is acknowledged that land may be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that the road will provide. The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and therefore is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with the 2035 Land Use Plan to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl, or unplanned development, when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth, as well as McLean County's stated goal to preserve farmland. This was quantified by measuring the number of acres in the area enclosed between the alignment and the limits of the adopted 2035 Land Use Plan. The more acres of undeveloped/agricultural land between the plan boundaries and the ESH, the higher the potential for uncontrolled, sporadic growth (sprawl). Alternatives that were inconsistent with this criterion (typically, alternatives located the farthest from the urban area) were eliminated from further consideration.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs. The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief in the Bloomington-Normal area is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side, which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and travel time savings for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



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October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments – Public Information Meeting 5

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I would be in favor of alternative 126. This alternative causes less impact to my residence.

Thank you

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

Please continue to attend the Public Information Meetings and submit feedback throughout the remainder of the project.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,

Eric S. Schmitt, RE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Please withhold name and contact information.

First of all thank you for doing a good job in publishing all the meeting materials and information on the project.

My preference and suggestions:

- 1. I prefer the no-build option with land being acquired and reserved for potential future build on highway if needed. This gives us the flexibility of not building the highway if past projections/trends do not hold up.*
- 2. If at all a highway needs to be built, I prefer it to be an Expressway instead of a Freeway due to the concerns expressed in the first question below.*
- 3. I prefer option 126 as it will decrease the amount of wasted land between Towanda Barnes and East side Hwy. Also any communities coming up to the East of the new bypass will not be as disconnected from the rest of Bloomington-Normal as they would be with option 127.*
- 4. I suggest we make this bypass a toll road when it is being accessed from i55 and i74. This will also go a long way in preventing transient interstate traffic from passing through the town. Local users on the other hand should not have to pay toll.*

Comments:

Is this highway for the local community or for interstate traffic? Why does it need to be a freeway?

GPS systems are primarily determining what route someone takes these days. If GPS or mapping applications like Google maps determine that the shortest route to get from I-55 to I-74 is by using the proposed highway, interstate traffic will use this. You mention that I will most likely

not be the case. How can you be sure? Is guesswork enough to make this determination? This highway will most probably used more as a bypass than for serving the local Bloomington-Normal Community. What we will end with is infrastructure paid by the local community dollars and sacrifices being used for interstate transit.

With this perspective, will it not be better to implement this as an Expressway as opposed to a Freeway? The proposal states that a freeway is supposed to be safer; can you point us to any studies which show freeways being safer than Expressways?

I do not see how it will serve the local community more if it is limited access with restrictions on the type of vehicle. An Expressway (instead of a freeway) will be more functional and will serve the local community better and will make sure that the local community tax dollars and sacrifice will serve this community. This will prevent countless tractor trailers from using this bypass just to save a few minutes. This alone will ensure that we will have to spend less to maintain the highway.

What about the land between Towanda-Barnes and the Bypass?

This is related to the previous question. Do the planners really expect residential developments between these two corridors? I think that this will most probably be a commercial strip and will not be suitable for residences. Even for this strip to be commercial, what businesses will be set up there? There are already a big box stores and others businesses of Veterans Bloomington-Normal, even with the expected expansion will not generate enough demand for additional Wal-Mart's, Best Buys etc.

This will be no-man's land where farming will not efficient and where residences will not make sense.

What is the future development plan?

I do not see the city planners publish their vision to where the future population growth will be in relation to the bypass. Where will the new residences come up? Is it going to be east of the bypass or to the west of it? What kind of expansion do the planners see in relation to the bypass. A visual model depicting this future state will help us understand this more.

Also, some of the previous options were dismissed due to affecting more farmland etc. If future expansion is going to happen to the East anyways, would it not make more sense to have the highway more to the East to from a boundary for future expansion? This will also prevent urban sprawl.

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 126 over Alternative 127 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the

November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

Three different facility type options were considered for the north-south Build Alternatives: a freeway, an expressway, and an arterial. The freeway and the expressway options consist of four travel lanes (two in each direction). The arterial option consists of four travel lanes (for new alignments) and six travel lanes (for alternatives that widen existing Towanda Barnes Road). The three options were evaluated for their ability to accommodate future traffic volumes, the type of stop and access control required, and factors related to safety with consideration of how each type fits the context of Bloomington-Normal. An arterial (such as existing Veterans Parkway) has the least access control of the three options, incorporates at-grade intersections (with signals or stop control), but when modeled with projected 2035 traffic it results in similar congestion conditions as existing Veterans Parkway. An expressway such as US 51 south of Bloomington has no advantages over a freeway option, given the number of interchanges that would be required per IDOT policy. An expressway would permit farm vehicle access; however, speed differences between farm vehicles and the traveling public could be as great as 40 mph. This variance in speed would create an unsafe condition for motorists and could be avoided by the implementation of a freeway, where farm vehicle access is not permitted. The freeway option is recommended as the most appropriate facility for the ESH. It is the best option to accommodate future traffic volumes, enhance mobility, provide appropriate access, and reduce crash potential.

The Initial Screening included the criterion "Does the alternative divide or isolate a neighborhood or community (Is the neighborhood or community divided into two or more sections? Are any sections isolated from community services?)." Thirty-six alternatives were eliminated based upon this criterion. This criterion is based upon the definitions and guidelines set forth in the IDOT Community Impact Assessment Manual. Subdivisions near the ESH do meet the definition of a neighborhood; however the remaining alternatives do not divide the neighborhood into two sections or isolate the neighborhood from community services.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a bypass would increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes, with the exception of an I-39/I-74 trip. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing interstate system. A detailed traffic model using existing traffic data and traffic patterns has been developed to ensure that the Preferred Alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will significantly divert traffic from the existing west side Interstate system or draw significant numbers of potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Several alternatives that were located to the east of the remaining alternatives were developed and evaluated throughout the alternatives analysis process. These eastern alternatives were eliminated for a number of reasons. The eastern alternatives were unable to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, because they do not accommodate growth on the east side, nor address local and regional mobility and access. Traffic analyses completed during the alternatives analyses found that locating the ESH farther east from Bloomington-Normal, such as along Lexington-Leroy Road, would make the ESH less desirable for local traffic. Some eastern alternatives were eliminated due to a higher number of farmland impacts in comparison to other alternatives. The far eastern alternatives were less compatible with future land use plans, given their distance from Bloomington-Normal, and were more likely to encourage urban sprawl or leapfrog development.

For more information including project updates, visit the project website at <http://www.eastsidehighway.com>

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Eric S Schmitt, County Engineer
Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer
102 S Towanda Barnes Road, Bloomington, IL 61705
(309) 663-9445 FAX (309) 662-8038

October 2, 2013

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Re: Disposition of Public Comments - Public Information Meeting 5

Thank you for your interest in the East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) project. Your comment was received within the official public comment period following the presentation of the alternative evaluation process to date at the Public Information Meeting held on June 19, 2013. The original comment received has been reproduced below. While an attempt was made to accurately reproduce the comment, the type-written reproduction below may not be verbatim.

Best choice would be ALT 126. Most direct route, keeps highway close to businesses, least disruptive to agriculture and equipment movement.

However, I still support the no-build option. Throughout the entire study I have not been convinced this highway will be necessary.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. Your preference for Alternative 126 over Alternative 127 has also been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does

not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
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I prefer alternative #126 to keep the growth closest to the city. However, I do not feel this Eastside Hwy is need at all. We are losing too much farmland.

Response:

Thank you for your comment on the remaining alternatives and your recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. Your preference for Alternative 126 over Alternative 127 has also been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

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Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the Environmental Assessment and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

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I am writing to voice my opinion that the East side highway should not be built. It has the support of virtually no one residing in the immediate area and would decrease the quality of life for many east side residents. Removing roughly 1000 acres of farmland and negatively impacting the quality of life of all homeowners on the east side is far worse than the no build option. If the projections for growth bear fruit, I would rather have a little more congestion on east-west routes than use the highway or deal with the noise pollution, etc. associated with the roadway.

If the needs and wishes of all of the residents are disregarded, the next best option would be the furthest east route that is farthest from the edge of town. Although this would still be a travesty and negatively impact the homeowner's close to the highway, it would be preferable to the western route that is basically in the backyard of many residents.

Thank you

Response:

Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. In addition, your preference for Alternative 127 over Alternative 126 has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the

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The ESH is being studied to provide for anticipated growth through Year 2035, and future land use plans for the east side show continued land development in this area. The 2035 Land Use Plan suggests that in the future, east side neighborhoods will no longer be isolated from the city but will likely be surrounded by new residential and commercial areas whether or not the ESH is built.

Both direct and indirect impacts of the ESH to many types of human and natural environment resources will be analyzed in detail. The following impact analyses that will be completed as part of the ESH EA may be of particular interest to those living near the ESH alignments: traffic noise, residential displacements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, air quality, visual impacts, public facilities and services, utilities, parks, community cohesion, environmental justice/special populations, and land use.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my thoughts on the proposed highway extension between I-55 and I-74 in Illinois as discussed at a community meeting at Normal West HS on 6/19.

First, I am appalled that the two "options" do not include not building the highway at all. I don't believe a strong case has been made to show that this extension is even needed. Who will benefit? Companies such as BP, Exxon or Yum Foods who will likely open businesses there? The farmers who will lose their land? Residents who will have to endure increased air and noise pollution? The state budget?

The argument that this will accommodate growth is bogus. This project will increase sprawl and contribute to traffic problems as well as hurt businesses along Veteran's Parkway. In addition this will only encourage driving and the use of fossil fuels which will add to the growing climate change crisis.

This project seems like another typical Illinois "pork" project that will not improve the quality of life in the area. It is hard to believe that this will make things easier for drivers. If one wants to get to I-74, you just stay on I-55 for a few more miles. Barring major accidents, traffic is nearly always clear on the highways around here, so why is this needed?

I will continue to voice my opposition and join forces with others in the area to vigorously oppose this ill-conceived, expensive and environmentally damaging project that will benefit a few at the expense of the many.

Response:

In addition to the two remaining Build Alternatives, the No Build Alternative also remains an option. Your preference for the No Build Alternative has been noted. The public comments, along with the resource impacts, will be considered when selecting a recommended Preferred Alternative. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and McLean County are responsible for making the final recommendation on the Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative can be selected as the Preferred Alternative if it is found that Alternative 126 and Alternative 127 have significant environmental impacts that outweigh the No Build Alternative's inability to meet the Purpose and Need. A summary of the public comments and the recommended Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Federal and State resource agencies in November 2013. At the meeting, the project team will seek concurrence from each agency representative on the recommended Preferred Alternative. The project team will notify the public via the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com) after the November meeting to provide an update on the status of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public at a Public Hearing to be tentatively held in the second quarter of 2014.

The ESH EA is being conducted through the joint efforts of McLean County and the communities of Bloomington and Normal (in coordination with IDOT and the FHWA), who recognize the need for additional future transportation capacity on the east and southeast sides of the communities to accommodate forecasted growth. The project team has not had and continues to have no involvement with developers.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 data, both Bloomington and Normal are in the top five fastest growing cities in Illinois. The population and employment forecasts for the ESH have been adjusted with the most recent data available (2013). The independent forecasts are obtained from national and state agencies (Woods & Poole Economics, IHS Global Insight, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security). The McLean County Regional Planning Commission developed future year traffic forecasts based on the employment and population projections for the area; these forecasts were used to develop the area's Long Range Transportation Plan (in coordination with FHWA) to identify transportation improvements to support the community's needs. The project team modeled the projected increase in traffic for the year 2035, and a valid, realistic traffic and roadway forecast for the year 2035 has been made. The analysis showed that network wide congestion relief in the Bloomington-Normal area is projected with the ESH Build options, but congestion would not be relieved with the No Build option. Reducing congestion in the transportation network has quality of life benefits for the community, such as lower travel times (leading to more free time), fewer vehicle emissions (leading to air quality benefits), and reduced fuel use (leading to less money spent on fuel and fewer oil resources used). Other benefits would include improved accessibility on the east side, which would benefit existing and planned urban development, and travel time savings for both local and regional users. Improved mobility can be a factor in attracting and retaining businesses, which also benefits the community.

The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for orderly improvement of infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. It is important to plan for the future so that when the need occurs, there is a transportation system in place that can accommodate the growth. If growth does not occur as anticipated, the ESH schedule can be modified or terminated. At this time, there are no funds for construction; therefore, a construction date has not been planned.

Farmland preservation was identified early in the planning process by the community as a whole as an important consideration in the ESH evaluation. Farmland preservation is one of the criteria considered in the EA and was an important component of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan. Farmland is a resource that needs to be considered, as McLean County has a high amount of prime and important farmland soils that can result in high yields. The number and acres of farms located between the urban development boundary of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alternative was measured. This measure uses the theory that alternatives located further from the edge of urban use may increase the likelihood of leapfrog development, unplanned growth, and urban sprawl into areas currently planned to remain farmland.

A detailed traffic noise assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative. The assessment will identify noise receptors for all noise-sensitive land uses (residences, parks, schools, etc., as defined by FHWA traffic noise regulation) where there is a potential for noise impacts. Typically, noise impacts occur within 500 feet of the edge of the roadway; due to public comments received for this project, some areas farther than 500 feet from the roadway edge will be studied for the ESH. Traffic noise modeling will be completed in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5, the only traffic noise model approved by FHWA. The traffic models developed will be field-verified with current traffic noise levels taken throughout the ESH area, as well as traffic volumes collected in

those locations during the noise data collection. The assessment will identify existing and future year no-build traffic noise levels and calculate the change in these levels associated with the proposed alternatives. The traffic noise analysis will be conducted following Federal and State traffic noise regulations and policies.

Noise receptors found to be "impacted" by the ESH (per FHWA and IDOT policies) will be assessed for noise abatement (noise barriers). In keeping with IDOT's traffic noise assessment policy, any noise abatement measure must be determined to be both feasible (can it be constructed and will it achieve a specified traffic noise reduction level) and reasonable (a combination of noise reduction goals and a benefit-cost analysis) in order to be considered by IDOT for implementation. IDOT typically uses noise walls for noise mitigation. A public meeting or hearing will present the results of the traffic noise analysis and proposed reasonable and feasible noise abatement measures. Viewpoints on proposed noise walls will be solicited from those who would benefit from the abatement, and the viewpoints determine if a noise wall will be constructed.

With regards to air quality, the ESH project must meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act contains detailed transportation "conformity" requirements, the purpose of which is to ensure that the project conforms to the State Implementation Plan. These conformity requirements are based upon air pollutant criteria levels as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Predicted air quality resulting from a roadway project is compared to Air Quality Standards set by the USEPA. The standards, set for six pollutants, are set at concentration levels designed to protect public health. If the standards are not met an area is called "non-attainment" and air quality is required to be improved. The study area meets the air quality standards for all six pollutants for which the USEPA has set standards: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. McLean County is listed as an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Additionally, impacts due to Mobile Source Air Toxics are discussed in the Environmental Assessment document.

In addition, the Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by the McLean County Regional Plan Commission must undergo a conformity analysis to prove that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan.

The funding for this project comes from the "Illinois Jobs Now!" Capital Bill. The Illinois Jobs Now! program specifically identified funds for preliminary engineering of the ESH. At present, Phase II (Detailed Engineering) and Phase III (Construction) of the ESH are not yet funded. One of the reasons for completing Phase I (Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering) of the ESH is to determine if the project should go forward. As such, construction funding is often not available for projects until the Phase I study has been approved by the FHWA. The source of funding for ESH construction has not been determined, but funding can come from a variety of sources. There are many Federal programs which fund construction projects. Some State funds may be available, and some funding may come from the county or cities.

Per Federal guidance, transportation planning activities must consider an area's existing land use patterns and future land use plans. It is acknowledged that land may be developed on both sides of the ESH because of the enhanced access that the road will provide. The majority of the area adjacent to the remaining alternatives is within the limits of the 2035 Land Use Plan and therefore is expected to be developed by 2035, with or without an ESH. One goal of the ESH was to work with the 2035 Land Use Plan to promote infill and redevelopment in order to control sprawl, which is a goal of the regional comprehensive plan. A road can induce sprawl, or unplanned development, when not built as part of a comprehensive land development strategy. Carefully coordinated and planned roads are among the most effective means of implementing desired plans for harmonious land use development. In the context of this study, alignments were evaluated for consistency with the project's stated need to accommodate managed growth, as well as McLean County's stated goal to preserve farmland.

The existing roadway network currently does meet existing traffic needs; however, traffic is expected to increase in the project area with or without an ESH due to a projected increase in population and employment, and because the 2035 Land Use Plan for the region anticipates continued urban growth, including on the east side. The existing roadway network will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in traffic. The ESH is being planned to accommodate Year 2035 traffic. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing Interstate system. The ESH will also relieve congestion on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The increase in future traffic within the study area due to population and employment gains has been modeled, and a valid, realistic traffic projection for the year 2035 has been made. Evaluations were not based directly on numerical traffic volume, but on the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which is a measure of a roadway's ability to carry a particular volume of vehicles. Projections were made for several Build options, a No Build option, and an East-West option (expansion only to multiple east-west arterials). This study will identify east-west routes that need to be improved to accommodate increased volume that would occur as a result of the ESH. Recommendations regarding east-west arterial street improvements will be included in the final report.

The approved Purpose and Need Statement for the ESH has two major points of focus: 1) to accommodate managed growth on the east side, and 2) to address both local and regional mobility and access. The proposed facility is not intended as an alternate route around Bloomington-Normal for through traffic on Interstate 55, Interstate 74, or Interstate 39/US 51. Using the proposed ESH as a bypass would increase the duration of any of the through trips on any of these routes, with the exception of an I-39/I-74 trip. The ESH is being designed to provide improved north-south and east-west mobility to and from existing and proposed east side residential areas and job centers and improve access to the existing interstate system. A detailed traffic model using existing traffic data and traffic patterns has been developed to ensure that the Preferred Alternative facilitates both local and regional traffic. For these reasons it is not anticipated that a new east side facility will significantly divert traffic from the existing west side Interstate system or draw significant numbers of potential customers away from west side businesses. The ESH project will improve overall mobility in the project area with more efficient travel, reduced congestion, and improved safety. Improved accessibility and mobility would be a long-term benefit to employees and customers of local businesses.

Regarding the use of fossil fuels, as part of the roadway development process, the Federal government and the State of Illinois require that all modes of travel be considered. IDOT encourages that multiple modes of transportation, including multi-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, are considered when planning new roadways. A multi-use bicycle and pedestrian path is being proposed as part of the ESH project. The path is proposed adjacent to the ESH facility.

The project team does acknowledge that not all stakeholders are in agreement with the ESH project. Commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information the public provides does influence the decision makers in their final decision. All public comments received throughout the project are considered by the project team. The number of negative comments an agency receives does not prevent an action from moving forward. Decision makers also receive other information and data such as operational and technical information related to implementing an action that they must consider when making a final decision. The transportation agencies have a responsibility to plan for infrastructure improvements to accommodate forecasted growth. Without such a plan, the result will be congestion and the negative impacts that it brings.

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Eric S. Schmitt, PE
McLean County Engineer

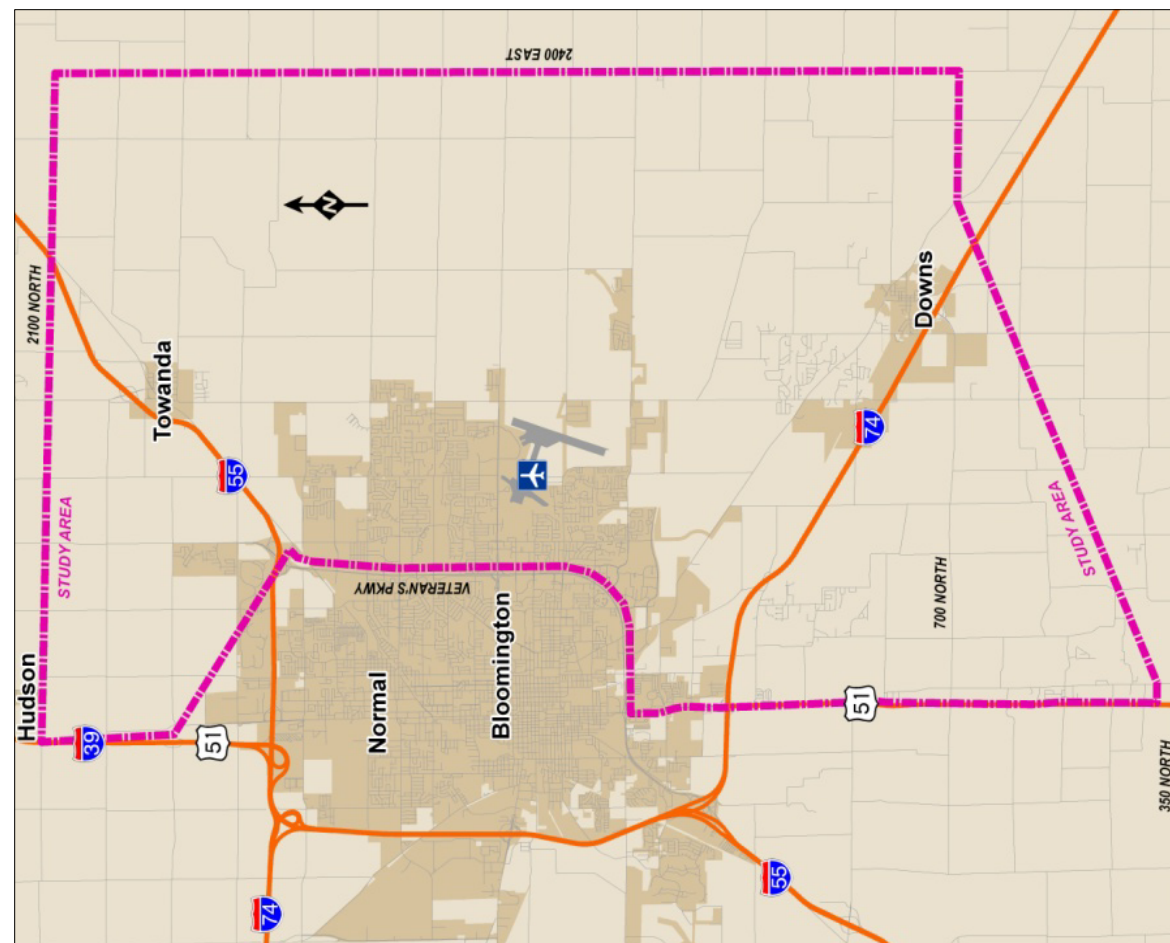
PROJECT NEWSLETTERS

East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
 125 West Church Street
 Champaign, IL 61820

Phone: 217-373-8901
 E-mail: ESHEA@clark-dietz.com

Visit www.eastsidehighway.com

ESH EA Project Study Area



The ESH EA project study area, shown in pink, covers an area of approximately 138 square miles of the Bloomington-Normal region in McLean County.



East Side Highway Environmental Assessment

ISSUE 1, DECEMBER 2010

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Introduction to the EA Process
- Public Involvement Overview
- Community Working Group Activity
- Origin-Destination Study
- Environmental Resource Corner
- Study Area Map

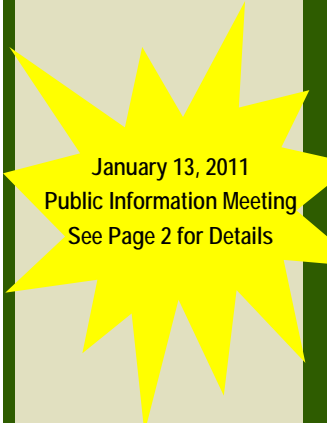
The East Side Highway Environmental Assessment is Underway!

The East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) began in the summer of 2010. The ESH EA is the next stage of analysis that follows the ESH Feasibility Study and Corridor Study. The ESH EA commences the last stage of the preliminary engineering study. Lead agencies overseeing the ESH EA are McLean County, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

FHWA states that an EA is used to determine the significant effects of a transportation project, when those effects are unclear. The purpose of the ESH EA is to evaluate a transportation improvement east of Bloomington-Normal between I-74 and I-55. The EA will consider a new transportation facility to meet the transportation needs of the existing and continued development on the east side of the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area.

During the EA process, the Purpose and Need of the project is defined and the affected environment is described. A reasonable range of transportation alternatives are evaluated, and the social and environmental impacts of each alternative are analyzed. The result of the analysis is the selection of a Preferred Alternative based on the impact analysis and engineering feasibility.

If significant impacts are identified, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared for the project. If no significant impacts are identified, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be developed, ending the environmental review process. Currently, the project is not funded for final design or construction. See below for the ESH EA Process Timeline.



The Public Involvement Process

Public participation is an important element of the EA process. The ESH EA will follow the IDOT Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) approach to public involvement. CSS is an interactive process that engages the public, or stakeholders, throughout the project process. CSS involves working with stakeholders to develop roadways that fit into and reflect the project's surroundings – its "context." Stakeholders are involved in the decision making process with continuous involvement throughout the entire development of the project. Working with a diverse group of local and regional stakeholders to understand the needs and concerns in the study area leads to transportation solutions designed to improve the quality of life for those who rely on the transportation systems. Advisory groups are an important part of the CSS process. More information is on the next page.

A Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Project:

- Is developed to fit into the community's surroundings - its "context"
- Is developed using stakeholder input and includes continuous communication and coordination with affected individuals and groups
- Is environmentally sensitive and considers the natural and human environment
- Is buildable and promotes safe travel

ESH EA Process Timeline



Community Working Group Information

An important component of the CSS process is the development of a Community Working Group (CWG). CWG members are volunteers who serve as representatives of stakeholders. Stakeholders are defined as anyone who could be affected by the project and have a stake in its outcome. The CWG is comprised of about 30 members representing different interest areas, such as agricultural, environmental, residents, businesses, and schools. The CWG members also represent different geographic areas around the Bloomington-Normal area.

The role of the CWG is to advise the Project Study Group (PSG). See the diagram and text below for information on the PSG. The CWG works with the project team throughout the project duration, provides input about objectives and alternatives, and communicates community issues to the project team. The CWG helps the project team build consensus among stakeholders as the project moves forward. The PSG recognizes the importance of the CWG's role in the project and values their input when making project related-decisions.

Public Information Meetings

The first Public Information Meeting (PIM) was held August 25, 2010, at the Normal Community High School Auditorium, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The purpose was to review the project history and study area, discuss the EA process, kickoff the CSS process, identify CWG members, and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the study.

The second PIM is scheduled for January 13, 2011, at the Normal Community High School Auditorium, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The purpose of the PIM is to present the project's Purpose & Need Statement (P&N). The P&N defines transportation issues or problems in the study area and

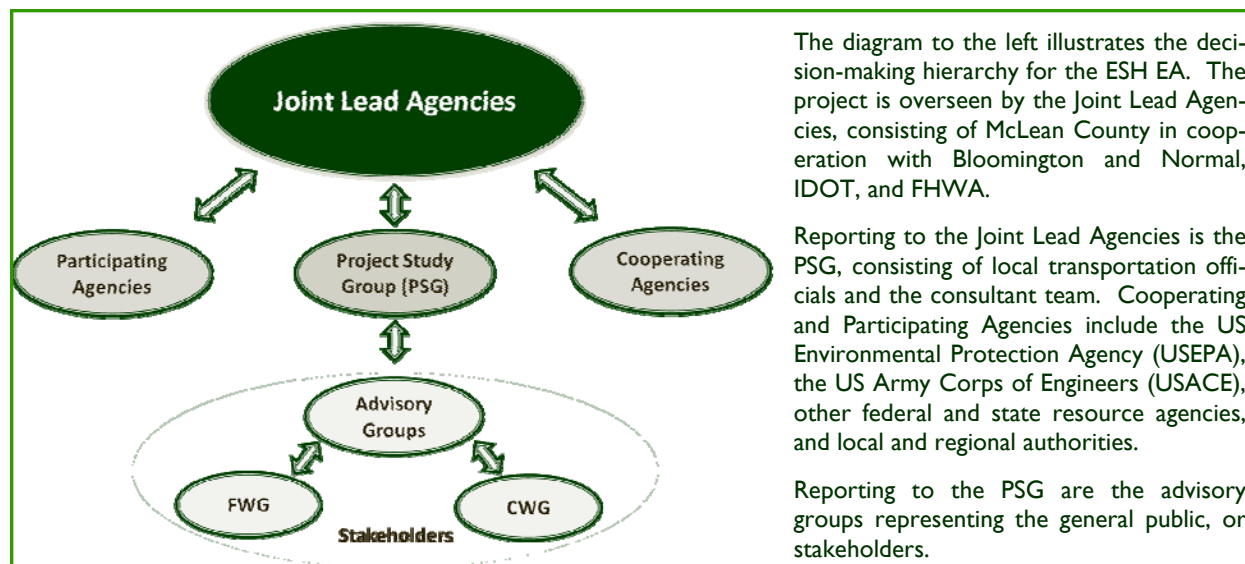
Two CWG meetings have been held to date. At CWG#1, held on October 28, 2010, the volunteers stated what interest area they represent and where they live and work. The project team presented the CWG ground rules and an overview of the major steps in the EA process (see page 1 for EA steps).

At CWG #2, held on December 7, 2010, the Purpose & Need development was discussed. The CWG members began to brainstorm alternative locations for an east side transportation facility on aerial photographs. The alternative development and evaluation process is an important step in the EA process and will continue to be developed, evaluated, and refined at future CWG meetings.

In addition to the CWG, Focus Working Groups (FWGs) will be formed as needed as the project progresses to work on specific issues such as sustainability, transit, environment, etc.

then defines the needs for the improvements that will be evaluated in the EA. The P&N was developed using stakeholder input during the 2009 ESH Corridor Study. Since that time, the P&N has been updated to include the most recent data available.

The P&N will be refined based on comments received after the PIM. The P&N will then be presented at the February NEPA/404 merger meeting, where FHWA and agency concurrence will be sought. Concurrence means that the agencies have no substantial objections to the P&N and that the project can progress to the next step.



Origin-Destination Study Yields Great Response

Many people may have noticed the survey crews at various intersections around town in late October and early November. These were not your typical roadway survey crews; they were gathering important information that will be used in the development of the ESH EA.

Between October 27 and November 4, project personnel distributed over 20,000 survey cards at 19 intersections across the study area as part of an Origin-Destination (O-D) Study. An O-D Study is a review of travel information used to determine future traffic patterns. One component of an O-D Study is to collect data to determine where trips start and end. Information collected through the O-D Study will provide data about actual trips being made in the study area. This information will help the project team understand travel patterns (frequently used routes or vehicle movements) in the study area. These patterns will be incorporated, along with projected population and employment data, in the Travel Demand Model to help predict future traffic volumes on roadways within the study area.

ESH EA Logo Contest

To promote awareness of the ESH EA, local middle school and high school students were invited to use their artistic talents to create a logo that represents the value of an ESH for the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area. Over 60 entries were received.

Two winners from Normal Community High School were selected based on originality, interpretation, and use of color. Components of the winning entries were combined and used as the basis for the final logo which will be used on various information materials throughout the process. The winners each receive a \$125 savings bond. Check out the cover of this newsletter for the final logo. Congratulations to the winners!

The following questions were asked on the survey:

- Where did your trip begin prior to receiving this card?
- What was your immediate destination when you were handed this card?
- What was the approximate time of this trip?
- Including yourself, how many people were in your vehicle?
- What time of the day did you receive this card?

To date, over 6,000 of the survey cards have been received, which is an excellent response for this type of survey. Thanks to all who responded.

The next steps for the Project Study team will be to summarize the responses, analyze the data, and utilize the information to update the travel demand model. The O-D Study will be documented in a technical memorandum which will be available for public reference on the project website.



Project staff handing out O-D survey cards

Environmental Resource Corner

The environmental studies of the ESH study area have begun. The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) will start field studies of threatened and endangered (T&E) species in spring 2011. These include birds, mammals, amphibians, fish, mussels, and vegetation. The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) will assess sites within the study area where potential soil or groundwater contamination may occur. Other resources, such as streams, floodplains, wetlands, high quality natural areas, noise, historic sites, archaeological sites, agricultural resources, and air quality, are also included in environmental studies. Special environmental studies may occur as circumstances warrant.

The environmental data collection also includes identifying cultural, social, and economic resources of the region and within each municipality. The environmental information being gathered will be used to help determine the future Preferred Alternative of the ESH.

How Can I Stay Involved?

You do not have to be a member of the CWG to be involved and stay informed. All stakeholders can stay involved by attending PIMs and visiting the project website (www.eastsidehighway.com).

Stakeholders can sign up for the project mailing list via the project website to receive project notifications and newsletters via mail or email. In addition, a detailed summary of what happened at each CWG meeting will be available on the project website.

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ISSUE 2, AUGUST 2011

EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

IN THIS ISSUE

- Project Update
- Public Involvement Update
- Environmental Studies Update
- Alternative Development and Evaluation
- Map of Alternatives
- Public Information Meeting Announcement

Project Update

The East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) is entering its second year of study. The ESH EA is a transportation planning study administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and McLean County. The purpose of this planning study is to evaluate a transportation improvement east of Bloomington-Normal between I-74 and I-55. The EA will consider a new transportation facility on the east side of the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area. The purpose of the ESH is to improve local and regional mobility and access to accommodate the growth forecasted on the east side of Bloomington-Normal.

Over the course of the last year, much has been accomplished. This newsletter contains updates of recent project activities, identifies the next steps in the study process, and serves to keep residents, businesses and anyone interested up to date on project progress. Newsletters will be sent to stakeholders periodically throughout the project, but for more detailed and up-to-date project information, please visit the project website at <http://eastsidehighway.com/>. If you do not have access to the internet and would like additional project information discussed in this newsletter, please call (217) 373-8901.

Public Involvement Update

Early coordination with the public, i.e. stakeholders, is accomplished by following the IDOT Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach to public involvement. CSS is an interactive public involvement process that engages stakeholders throughout the project process. An important component of CSS is the Community Working Group (CWG). CWG members serve as representatives of the public and advise the project team during project milestones. Since October 2010, the project study team has met with the CWG six times. Meeting discussions

included current transportation problems, refining the purpose and need of the project and developing alternatives. Over the course of several meetings, the CWG members developed and refined a range of alternatives for the ESH. The CWG is serving in an advisory role during the alternative evaluation process, which is described on the next page. The project team will continue to meet with the CWG for the remainder of the project. You can read more about the CWG meetings on the project website.

PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

A Public Information Meeting will be held on Thursday, August 18, 2011, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at Normal Community High School located at 3900 E. Raab Road, Normal, Illinois. The purpose of the meeting is to present the alternative development and evaluation process to date. A brief presentation will be given at 6:15 and 7:15. The content at each presentation will be identical. The presentation will include an update of population and employment forecasts and an overview of the alternative evaluation process. The remainder of the meeting will be open-house format with opportunity to browse exhibits. Staff will be available for discussion and questions. Information presented will be made available on the project website following the meeting. Comments will be taken at the meeting, and by mail, email, or fax after the meeting.

Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations should contact Clark Dietz, Inc. at (217) 373-8900 to advise of planned attendance and needed accommodations.

Environmental Studies Update



Continued from page 1

Special Waste

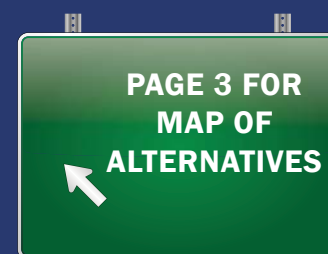
The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) provided a general assessment of sites within the study area where potential soil or groundwater contamination could occur. Some additional study may be needed depending upon alternatives being studied.

Biological Resources

The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) will conduct field studies of biological resources in the study area during the second half of 2011. These studies may include a variety of resources, such as vegetation, streams, and wetlands depending upon the quality of habitat available.* Two state threatened and endangered species have been reported within the area; these include the loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) and Kirtland's snake (*Clonophis kirtlandii*). To date, no biological resources field surveys have been completed for the project.

The environmental data collection also includes identifying floodplains, high quality natural areas, soils, traffic noise, agricultural resources, air quality, social, and economic resources of the region. The environmental information being gathered will be used to recommend the future alignment of the ESH.

*Vegetation surveys will also identify high quality forest resources, in addition to general land cover throughout the selected corridor.



Environmental Studies Update

Environmental studies of the East Side Highway were initiated in 2010. The majority of field surveys will occur during the second half of 2011.

Cultural Resources

In spring 2011 all buildings and structures in the project area were surveyed to determine if historic or potentially historic structures exist. These structures are protected by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of

the Transportation Act of 1966. IDOT identified two structures in the project area. Duncan Manor on Towanda-Barnes Road is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and a single-family home southeast of Towanda was found to be potentially eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. Archeological surveys will be completed as the project progresses, but have not been completed to date.

Continued on page 4

Alternative Development and Evaluation Overview

The range of ESH alternatives, as developed by the public, the CWG, the project team, and agencies, are being narrowed down through a five-step process. In addition to the alternatives developed by the CWG and the project team, the No-Build Alternative, a Transportation System Management (TSM)/Travel Demand Management (TDM) alternative, a transit alternative, and an east-west only alternative are included in the evaluation.

These alternatives were included based in part on public input. The first three levels of analysis have been completed, are summarized below, and will be presented at the next Public Information Meeting (see back of newsletter for details). Prior to the start of the screening process, 120 potential alternative combinations existed. The goal of the five-step process is to identify a single Preferred Alternative for the project through an Environmental Assessment.



STEP 1 INITIAL SCREENING EVALUATION

All 120 alternatives were included in the Initial Screening Evaluation. The three criteria used in this evaluation were:

1. Does this alternative avoid direct impacts to State or Federally protected areas?
2. Does the alternative meet the horizontal and vertical clear zone requirements for the Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA)?
3. Does the alternative avoid dividing or isolating a neighborhood or community?

If an alternative did not meet each of the criteria in this screening, it was eliminated from further study. Approximately 30 alternatives were eliminated during this level of analysis.

STEP 2 PURPOSE AND NEED EVALUATION

The alternatives remaining after the Initial Screening were evaluated for consistency with the project's Purpose & Need. As defined in the Purpose and Need Statement, the identified needs for the project are:

1. Accommodate managed growth
2. Provide improved local and regional mobility and access

The needs were broken down into specific criteria and each alternative was evaluated based upon adherence to the criteria. The alternatives that were least consistent with meeting the criteria were eliminated. Eight alternatives were eliminated from further study as a result of the Purpose & Need Evaluation.

NEXT STEPS

Step 4 in the alternative evaluation process is the Alignment Analysis. In this evaluation, the remaining alternatives will be refined and facility type (freeway, expressway, or arterial) will be established. The Alignment Analysis criteria are based upon impacts to environmental and socio-economic resources, similar to the Macro Analysis. However, this screening will consider additional factors not considered in the Macro Analysis, such as additional socio-economic impacts, sustainability measures, and refined traffic operations.

The last step, Step 5, in the alternative evaluation process is the Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will include detailed analyses based on more specific measurement of the impacts resulting from each alternative. Per Federal regulations, the No-Build alternative is carried into the EA. The end result of the EA is identification of the single Preferred Alternative.

STEP 3 MACRO ANALYSIS EVALUATION

The Macro Analysis evaluates the impacts of each remaining alternative on environmental and socio-economic resources, such as prime and important farmland, homes, floodplains, parks, and business impacts. All remaining alternative corridors measure 500 feet in width. Resource impacts for each alternative were compared for alternative elimination. The alternatives with the highest impacts were eliminated.

Over 40 alternatives were eliminated during the Macro Analysis. A map of the alternatives remaining after the Macro Analysis is shown on the opposite page.

ALTERNATIVES

Transportation Systems Management

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) strategies are typically small improvements to the existing transportation system, such as the installation of dedicated turn lanes, construction of spot geometric changes, or the adjustment of signal timing to improve traffic flow.

Travel Demand Management

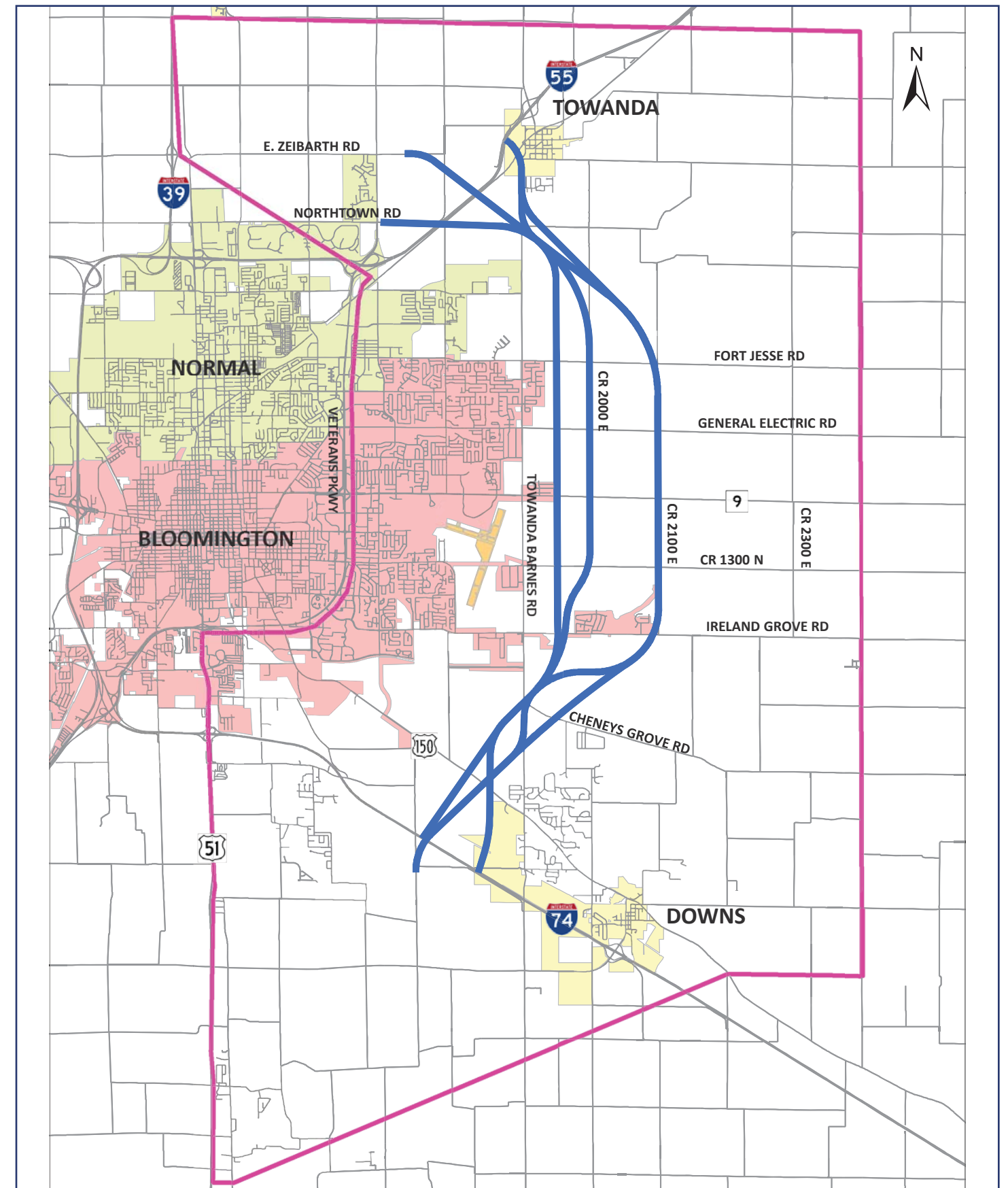
Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies are policy changes such as alternative work times, ride-sharing or bicycle incentives that are implemented to influence travel behavior and spread travel demand across peak periods and reduce the demand for single-occupancy vehicle trips.

Transit Alternative

The transit alternative consists of stand-alone transit, pedestrian and bicycle improvements. This alternative would connect the east side to various activity centers, existing bus routes, and the Normal multi-modal center and include improved pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

East-West Alternative

The East-West Alternative consists of improving only certain east-west arterials between I-55 and I-74 on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. The improvements were designed to reduce congestion and include adding one lane in each direction. The east-west arterials included in the alternative are Route 66, General Electric Road, Empire Street/IL 9, Ireland Grove Road, and Route 150.



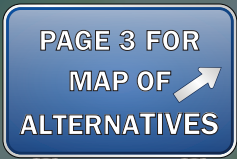
Map of Alternatives

The map above shows the alternatives remaining after the Macro Analysis Evaluation. These alternatives will be carried forward for further evaluation. In addition to these alternatives, the No-Build Alternative will remain under consideration.



IN THIS ISSUE

- Project Update
- Public Involvement Update
- Alternative Development and Evaluation
- Map of Alternatives



Project Update

The East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) is approaching its third year of study. The ESH EA is a transportation planning study administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and McLean County. The purpose of this planning study is to evaluate a transportation improvement east of Bloomington-Normal between I-74 to the south and I-55 to the north. The EA will consider a new transportation facility to meet the transportation needs of the continued growth on the east side of the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area.

This newsletter contains updates of recent project activities and identifies the next steps in the study process. This newsletter is a way to keep residents, businesses and anyone with a stake in the project informed of the project's progress. Newsletters will be sent to stakeholders periodically throughout the project, but for more detailed and up-to-date project information, please visit the project website at www.eastsidehighway.com. If you do not have access to the internet and would like additional project information discussed in this newsletter, please call (217) 373-8901.

Public Involvement Update

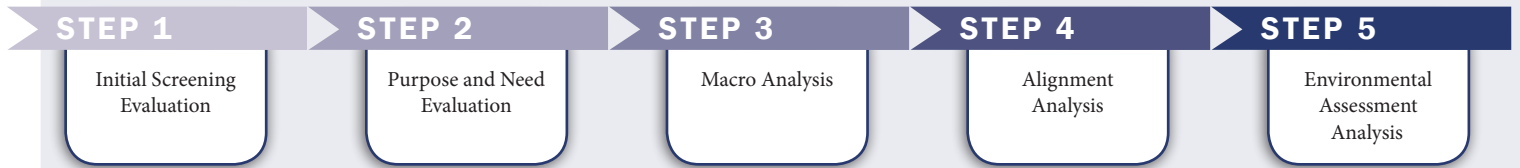
Early coordination with the public, or stakeholders, is accomplished by following the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) approach to public involvement. An important component of CSS is the Community Working Group (CWG). CWG members serve as representatives of the public and advise the project team during project milestones. Since October 2010, the project study team has met with the CWG seven times. The CWG has served an advisory role during the alternative evaluation process, which is described on the next page. The project team will continue to meet with the CWG for the remainder of the project. You can read more about the CWG meetings on the project website.

The third Public Information Meeting was held on August 18, 2011. The purpose of the meeting was to present the first three steps in the alternative evaluation process. Public comments received during and after the meeting included comments on the proposed location of the ESH, questions about the 2035 population and employment forecasts, and concerns about safety, noise, and agricultural impacts. All commenters who include their contact information receive a letter addressing their questions. Public input is important in the ESH project. The project team considers public input when making decisions.

All public comments become part of the official public record and will be published in the EA document. Comments may also be posted to the project website; commenter contact information (address, email, phone number) will be omitted from the website.

Alternative Evaluation Update

The ESH alternatives are narrowed down through a five-step evaluation process as illustrated in the graphic below. The first three steps of the process were explained in Newsletter Issue #2 and at the Public Information Meeting held on August 18, 2011. To read more about these steps visit the project website at www.eastsidehighway.com.



Since the August Public Information Meeting, the project team has been completing step four in the process, called the Alignment Analysis. The 40 alternatives remaining after the Macro Analysis were included in the Alignment Analysis.

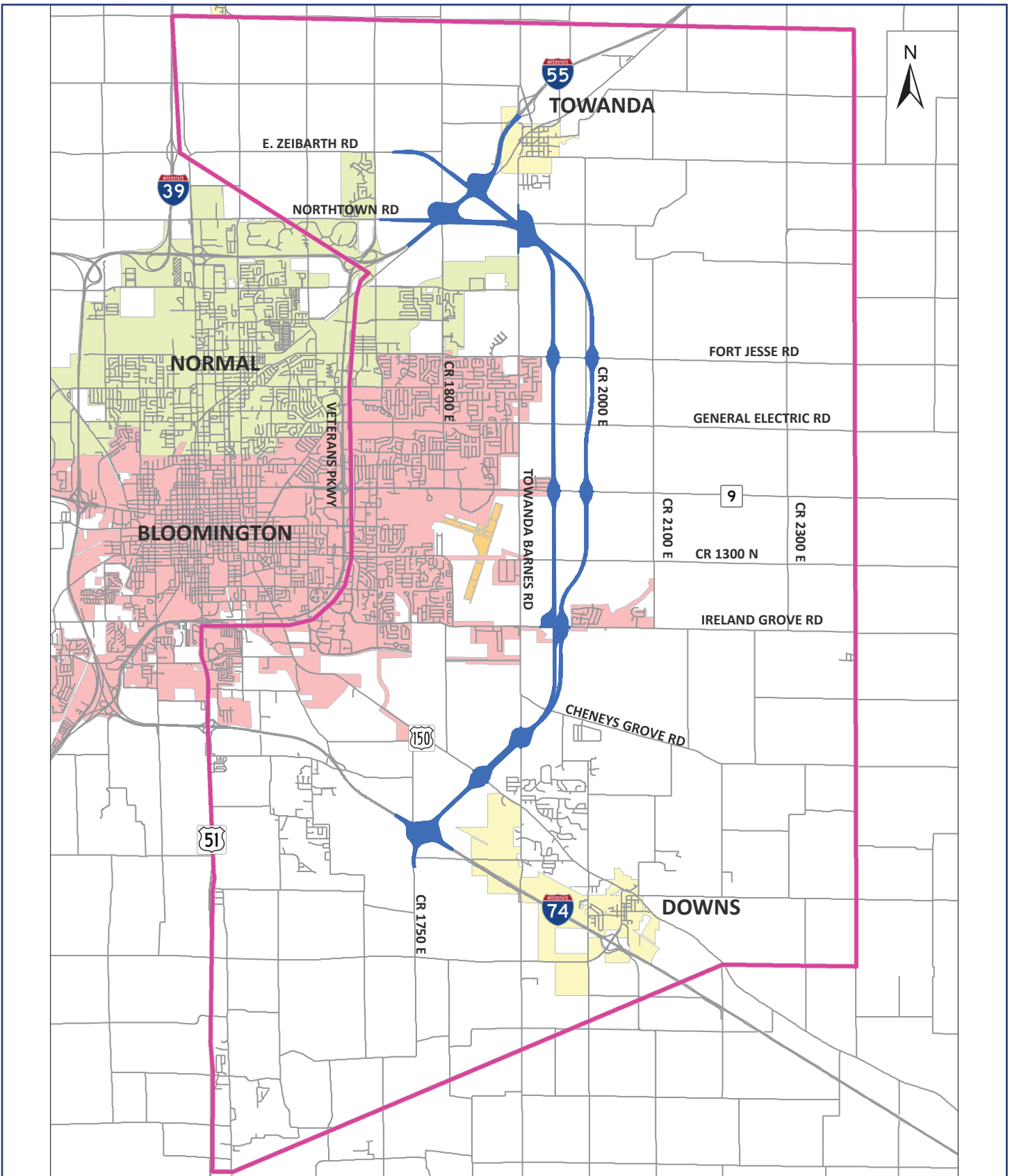
The Alignment Analysis considers the socioeconomic and environmental resource impacts resulting from the remaining alternatives. Forty-seven resources were considered, including those listed below:

- | Environmental | Community and Economic | Agricultural | Cultural | Design/Traffic | Sustainability |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodplain • Floodway • Streams • Biologically significant streams • Class I streams • Drinking water – surface water • Wetlands • Special waste sites • Forested areas • Threatened and endangered species | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes • Commercial buildings • Public facilities/access change • Parks • Utility crossings • Utility infrastructure • Sensitive noise receptors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime and important farmland • Farm outbuildings • Tract severances • Tracts with access change • Centennial/ sesquicentennial farms • Farms otherwise affected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic sites • Cemeteries • Archaeological sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right-of-way acquisition • Engineering and operation consideration of north and south termini • Area of total pavement • Engineering constructability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of new pavement • Area of farmland outside of 2035 Land Use Plan used for right-of-way • Area of primary agriculture between alignment and 2035 Land Use Plan • Farm tracts between alignment and 2035 Land Use Plan • Amount of right-of-way within each watershed • Riparian areas • Highly Erodible Soils • Proximity to existing bike/ped networks |

The screening/elimination process considered the range of impacts for each resource within 250 foot alignments and assigned a threshold value based upon that range. Alignments with impacts above the threshold value established for each resource were eliminated. At the end of the Alignment Analysis, four alternatives remain under consideration. The alternatives are shown on the opposite page.

NEXT STEP

The last step, Step 5, in the alternative evaluation process is the Environmental Assessment (EA) Analysis. The EA will include detailed analyses based on specific measurements of the impacts resulting from each alternative. Per Federal regulations, the No-Build alternative is carried into the EA. The end result of the EA is the single Preferred Alternative. The EA will be available for public review in the summer of 2013.



Map of Alternatives

The map above shows the alternatives remaining after the Alignment Analysis. These alternatives will be carried forward for detailed evaluation in the Environmental Assessment Analysis. In addition to these alternatives, the No-Build Alternative will remain under consideration. Visit the project website at www.eastsidehighway.com to view the alignments on an interactive map.

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PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

A Public Information Meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2012, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at Normal Community High School located at 3900 E. Raab Road, Normal, Illinois. The purpose of the meeting is to present the alternative development and evaluation process to date. A brief presentation will be given at 6:10 and 7:10. The content at each presentation will be identical. The presentation will include an update of the alternative evaluation process and the alignments that will be studied in detail in the Environmental Assessment Analysis. The remainder of the meeting will be open-house format with opportunity to browse exhibits. Staff will be available for discussion and questions. Information presented will be made available on the project website following the meeting. Comments will be taken at the meeting and by mail, email, or fax after the meeting.

Persons with disability requiring special accommodations should contact Clark Dietz at (217)373-8900 to advise of planned attendance and needed accommodations.

Environmental Resources Corner

Sustainable design is the practice of implementing measures to both effectively use resources and minimize impacts on these resources. The regional land use and comprehensive plans were used as a guide for sensible growth that includes local agriculture and farmland preservation strategies. Eight sustainability criteria were used to assess alternative alignments for the ESH. These criteria describe factors affecting land use, stream quality, and bicycle accessibility. Three of the eight sustainability criteria relate to agriculture:

1. identifying the amount of farmland outside the 2035 Land Use Plan used for ROW by an alignment,
2. area primary agriculture in the 2035 Land Use Plan that exists between a proposed alignment and the 2035 developed land use boundary, and
3. farm tracts between the 2035 developed land use boundary and the proposed alignment.

First, each proposed alignment was assessed to determine how much land designated as “primary agriculture” was used for right of way. Primary agriculture areas are areas best suited for intensive farming that occurs outside of the Urban Growth Areas identified in the 2035 Land Use Plan designated by the McLean County Comprehensive Regional Plan. The second analysis measured the primary agriculture area between the Urban Growth boundaries of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each alignment. The third analysis alternative measured the number of farm tracts between the Urban Growth boundaries of the 2035 Land Use Plan and each proposed alternative. The farmland used and number of farm tracts were both measured to demonstrate the range of potential land development effects (including leapfrog development, other unplanned urban growth outside the urban area, and associated infrastructure extension demand).

Applying an environmentally sustainable approach toward transportation stimulates smart growth and preserves quality of life for present and future generations.



EAST SIDE HIGHWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

IN THIS ISSUE

- PROJECT OVERVIEW
- ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES CORNER
- PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT UPDATE
- MAP OF ALTERNATIVES
- NEXT STEPS

Project Overview

The East Side Highway (ESH) Environmental Assessment (EA) is a transportation planning study administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and McLean County. The purpose of the study is to evaluate a transportation improvement east of Bloomington-Normal between I-74 and I-55. The improvement will meet the local transportation needs of the continued growth on the east side of the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area, and will also serve regional travel. Over the course of the study, over 125 alternatives have been developed and evaluated. The alternatives were screened during the alternative evaluation process,

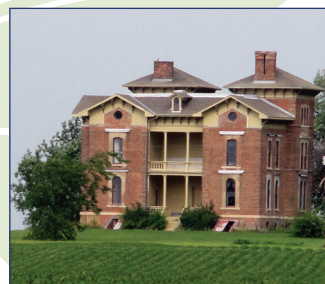
and the remaining alternatives are shown on Page 3 of this newsletter.

In addition to a map of the remaining alternatives, this newsletter contains updates of recent project activities, and identifies next steps in the study process. The newsletter is a way to keep stakeholders informed of the project's progress. Newsletters are sent periodically throughout the project; for more detailed and up-to-date information please visit the project website at www.eastsidehighway.com. If you do not have access to the internet and would like additional project information discussed in the newsletter, please call (217) 373-8901.

Environmental Resources Corner



State biologists conducted stream surveys in the project area over the summer. One specimen of a state-threatened slippershell freshwater mussel species, *Alasmindota viridis*, was identified in Money Creek upstream of the ESH alignments. The ESH will not affect this area of Money Creek, and no protected mussels were identified in the other project area streams.

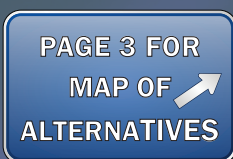


Historic Places (National Register) for its significance in architecture and agriculture. The home's builder and original owner, William Duncan, was a successful cattle breeder and the home's design is unique to the area. All ESH alignments avoid physically impacting Duncan Manor.

US Route 66 is one of the Nation's principal east-west arterials. Seven Illinois sections of US Route 66 are listed on the National Register; however, within McLean County it is not listed on the National Register. The remaining ESH alternatives would cross over Route 66 and the adjacent railroad. Route 66 will remain open for travel under the ESH.

Historic resources identified near the ESH include Duncan Manor and US Route 66, located near I-55 at the north end of the project:

Duncan Manor is an Italianate mansion listed on the National Register of



Public Involvement Update

Since the beginning of the project in 2009, four Public Information Meetings (PIMs) have been held. The fourth PIM was held in January 2012, where the alternative evaluation process and the remaining alternatives under consideration were presented. The fifth PIM will be held in the first quarter 2013. You can read more about the PIM #5 on Page 4 of this newsletter.

Advisory groups made up of local citizens play an important role in the public involvement process. In 2012, three Focus Working Groups (FWGs) were formed. Similar to the Community Working Group (CWG), the role of the FWGs is to advise the project team. The FWGs consist of volunteers who have an area of expertise or interest in certain topics. There are three FWGs – Land Use and Access Management, Alternative Modes, and Sustainability. A summary of the work done with the three groups is discussed below. You can read more about the CWG and FWG meetings on the project website.

LAND USE AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT FWG

The Land Use and Access Management FWG was formed to identify issues pertaining to existing and future land use and accessibility. Members include farmers and homeowners, and representatives from government agencies, fire and police departments, emergency agencies, and businesses. The group has met three times to date. At the first meeting, the members were asked to brainstorm answers to the question “In what ways do you think an ESH will affect land use and access?” Based on the brainstorm sessions and ideas presented by the project team, the FWG members discussed topics such as local mobility, residential access, farm operations and farm vehicle mobility, emergency response access, business development, and planned growth. The members have provided input on proposed interchange types and locations.

ALTERNATIVE MODES FWG

The Alternative Modes FWG was formed to determine what kinds of improvements could be recommended as part of the East Side Highway project to encourage alternative modes of travel (i.e., bicycling, walking, and transit). Providing infrastructure to support these modes can help to reduce traffic congestion on the local roads and highway system, and consideration of these modes is required by federal and state law. The FWG met in March 2012, and provided valuable input regarding bicycling, pedestrian, and transit needs in the project area. Over the summer, the Project Study Group used this information to develop preliminary ideas to incorporate alternative modes into the East Side Highway project, as well as ideas for future implementation by the communities. These ideas were presented to the Alternative Modes FWG in November for their feedback and recommendations.

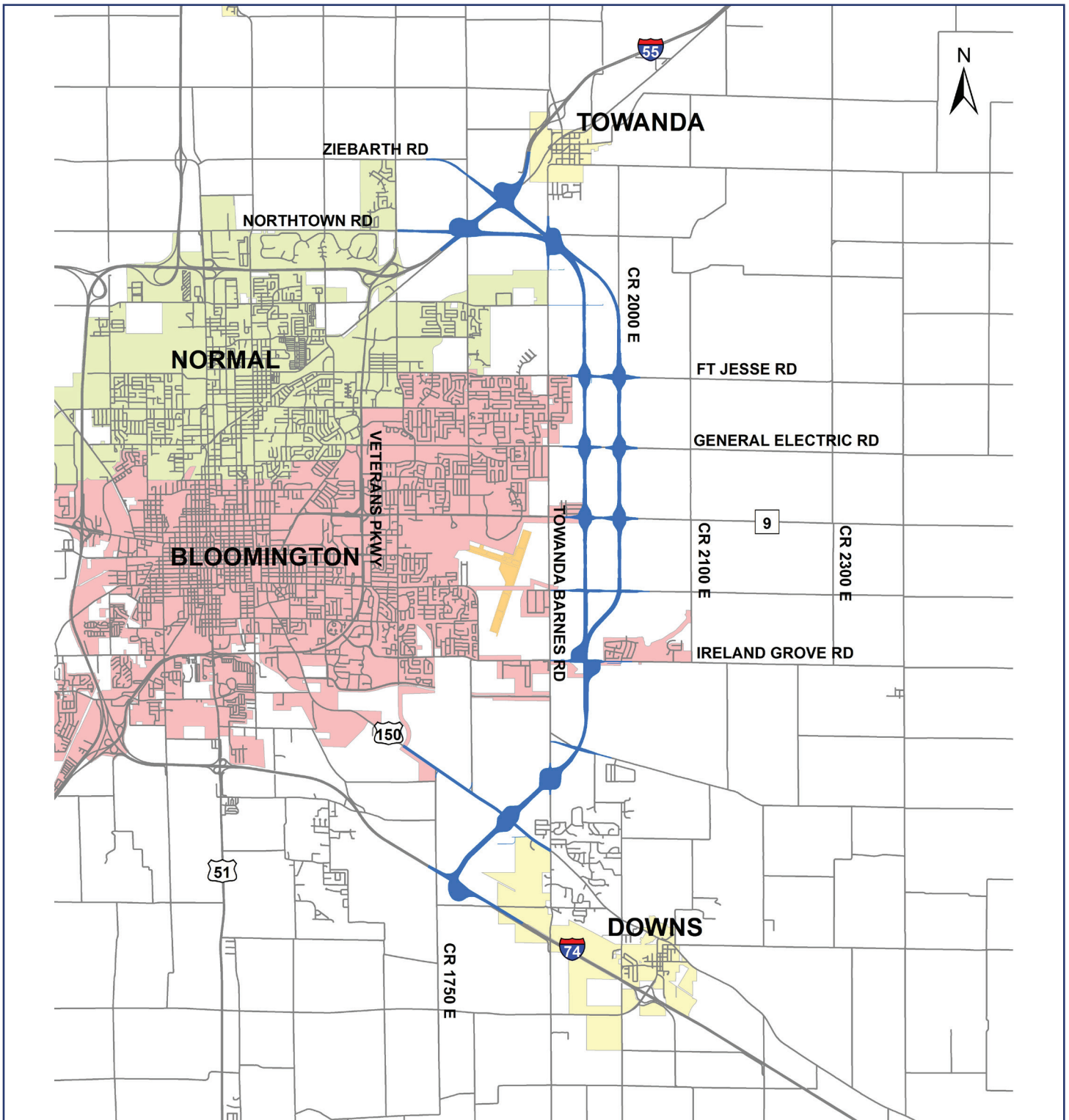
SUSTAINABILITY FWG

The Sustainability FWG was established to identify measures to effectively use resources and minimize impacts on these resources within the project area. The Sustainability FWG includes representatives of watershed groups, local government, academia, U.S. Geological Survey, and local citizens. The Sustainability FWG has met twice. The first meeting provided an overview of the purpose of FWG and explained the Illinois-Livable, and Sustainable Transportation (ILAST) guide. Participants identified ILAST categories of most interest/concern to them as they relate to the East Side Highway project. At the second meeting, the FWG discussed the results of the ILAST review. The ILAST categories important to the group include trees and plants, wildlife, storm water treatment, alignment location, and design practices to protect water quality.

The FWG also discussed the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) wildlife hazard limitations, which encompass a 5 mile radius around the Central Illinois Regional Airport. Airport friendly best management practices (BMPs) will need to comply with FAA restrictions to protect aircraft. A BMP concept development is in progress which includes eight BMPs and recommendations of application within the ESH project. In early December, the Sustainability FWG will meet to discuss the BMP design concepts and recommended applications.

Proposed BMP Design Concepts:

- Natural Bottom Culverts
- Meandering Swales
- Filter Strips
- Bioswales/Vegetated Swales
- Plantings
- Median Utilization
- Infiltration Basins/Trenches
- Riparian Buffers



Map of Alternatives

The map above shows the alternatives remaining under consideration. There are two remaining north-south alternatives. Both of the alternatives currently have two interchange options at I-55. The alternatives have been refined since the Public Information Meeting (PIM) #4 held on January 11, 2012. The refinements were made based upon discussions with the CWG, the FWGs, and continued geometric analysis of the remaining alignments. Refinements included changes to some interchange types and location. The interchanges provide access to the major east-west roads. The proposed ESH alternatives are four-lane (two lanes in each direction) freeways with full access control – similar to an interstate. Visit the project website at www.eastsidehighway.com to view the alternatives on an interactive map.

East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
125 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Phone: 217-373-8901
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VISIT WWW.EASTSIDEHIGHWAY.COM



Existing noise levels near the remaining ESH alternatives will be measured by monitoring at key locations. The existing noise levels are compared with the traffic noise model developed for the project so future traffic noise levels are more accurately predicted.

Noise monitoring is typically conducted at selected exterior areas of noise-sensitive land uses (see box below) that people frequently use. Land uses that are considered noise-sensitive include residences, hotels, restaurants, parks, and more. Land uses considered not sensitive to noise impacts include agricultural, industrial, and retail. Noise monitoring is conducted on weekdays during traffic peak hours, when it is not raining or snowing, and when wind will not influence noise levels.

Noise Monitoring Location Examples:

- Backyards of Homes
- Benches, Picnic Tables
- Pools, Bleachers
- Playground Equipment

Next Steps

The remaining alternatives shown on Page 3 are currently being evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA) Analysis. The No Build Alternative is included in the EA. The EA Analysis includes detailed measurements of the impacts resulting from each alternative. The EA considers impacts to agriculture, community, environmental, noise and historical features. Sustainable features will be incorporated into the design of the ESH when feasible.

The preliminary results of the EA will be presented at Public Information Meeting (PIM) #5 which will tentatively be held in the first quarter 2013. The project team will send out notifications with the date, time, and location of PIM#5 to everyone on the mailing list. The PIM announcement will also be placed in local newspapers and on the project website.

Based on the results of the EA Analysis and public input received after PIM#5, a single Preferred Alternative will be selected. The Preferred Alternative will be presented to the State and Federal resource agencies in June 2013. The resource agencies must unanimously approve the Preferred Alternative. The EA document will be available for public review in summer of 2013. The EA document will be written in a reader friendly format and will include a discussion of the Preferred Alternative.



MEDIA ARTICLES

\$10.4M east-side highway study approved

By M.K. Guetersloh | mkguetersloh@pantagraph.com | Posted: Tuesday, June 15, 2010 11:01 am

BLOOMINGTON -- A four-year study will begin this summer to determine the location of an east-side highway.

The McLean County Board on Tuesday approved a \$10.4 million contract with Clark-Dietz, a Champaign-based engineering firm, to conduct the next phase of the proposed highway that would connect interstates 55 and 74 east of Bloomington-Normal.

The 11-8 vote shows not all members think the money should be spent on the highway.

George Wendt of Bloomington, who was among "no" votes, said he was frustrated with state and federal governments spending money they don't have.

The Illinois Department of Transportation set aside \$13.6 million to fund the next step in locating the highway.

Paul Segobiano of Bloomington voted "no" after questioning the number of jobs the spending would create. An estimate was not immediately available.

In March, the board voted 9-6 to accept the state's money for the project.

Last year, Clark-Dietz completed a feasibility study that determined a general route for the highway, which will be about 500 feet wide. That \$1.2 million study suggested the route would be about a half-mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and would be a controlled-access route similar to U.S. 51 south of Bloomington.

This study will better define the route, narrowing it to a path about 300 feet wide. The study also will include an environmental study.

Board member Stan Hoselton of Lexington said, at best guess, the study will be completed in 2014.

Engineers believe it likely will be 10 to 20 years before construction begins, if the project is approved. The \$260 million to \$320 million cost would require significant federal funding to complete, county engineers said.



Volunteers needed for local highway study

By M.K. Guetersloh | mkguetersloh@pantagraph.com | Posted: Wednesday, August 25, 2010 9:53 pm

NORMAL -- Engineers conducting a four-year study of a proposed east-side highway are looking for volunteers to participate in a community work group.

On Wednesday, Jerry Payonk of Champaign-based engineers Clark Dietz presented a 45-minute overview of the next phase of study for the proposed highway that will run east of Bloomington-Normal and connect Interstate 55 near Towanda with Interstate 74 near Downs.

About 60 people attended the meeting held at Normal Community High School, 3900 E. Raab Road.

"This does not mean construction will start in 2014 when this study is completed," Payonk said. "If all the funding was lined up and ready, we would still eight years away from construction and the funding is not there."

The meeting marks the start of a \$10.4 million environmental study funded by state money and conducted by McLean County, the city of Bloomington, the town of Normal and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

As part of the study, the engineers want about 20 to 25 community volunteers to help provide public involvement in the project.

But the highway remains a tough sell to some area residents. During Payonk's presentation one man asked about whether the issue could be decided by a referendum.

The proposed highway likely would cost \$260 million to \$320 million to build and it would be completed in about 20 years. Payonk said the construction project would have to be divided into stages with sections of the road built one at a time.

Last year, Clark Dietz completed a feasibility study that determined a general route for the highway, which will be about 500 feet wide. That \$1.2 million study suggested the route would be about a half-mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and would be a controlled-access route similar to U.S. 51 south of Bloomington.

This study will better define the route, narrowing it to a path about 300 feet wide. The study includes a report on how the highway would change the human and natural environment along that path.

10/23/2010

A4 • The Pantagraph • Saturday

Daily Digest

NEWS IN BRIEF

B-N traffic surveys to begin

BLOOMINGTON — Workers with Clark-Dietz in Champaign will be handing out traffic surveys at intersections on the east side of the Twin Cities starting Monday.

The engineering firm is conducting an in-depth analysis of traffic patterns as part of its work on a four-year environmental study for the proposed eastside highway.

Officials from the engineering firm said workers would be at intersections as weather permits. The surveys include a few questions and a postage-paid envelope so people can send the surveys back to Clark-Dietz.

Comments sought today on east-side highway study

Purpose and need report to be presented

By M.K. Guetersloh

mkguetersloh@pantagraph.com

NORMAL — Residents who want to voice their opinion on whether an east-side highway should be built will have the chance to comment on the highway study from 6 to 8 p.m. today at Normal Community High School, 3900 E. Raab Road.

Clark Dietz, the engineering

firm conducting a four-year environmental study of the proposed highway, will present the purpose and need report for the study during an open house-style forum. Public comment on the purpose and need report will be collected for two weeks after today's meeting.

McLean County Highway Engineer Eric Schmitt said public opinion is critical to the project.

"Part of the process is whether the community thinks we need to build this (highway) on the east side," Schmitt said.

A corridor study completed in 2009 generally placed the proposed highway about half a mile east of Towanda Barnes Road. The proposed highway would run east of Bloomington-Normal and connect Interstate 55 near Towanda with Interstate 74 near Downs.

"If people like the highway or don't like the highway, they

need to be as specific on their reasons as possible when they provide their comments," said Jerry Payonk with Clark Dietz.

Comments included

The public comments will be included with the purpose and need report when it is filed with the Federal Highway Administration in February.

If the proposed highway is built, the project would cost more than \$200 million and require federal funds to complete.

Highway forum

What: Review of the purpose and needs of a proposed highway on Bloomington-Normal's east side

When: 6 to 8 p.m. today

Where: Normal Community High School, 3900 E. Raab Road, Normal

GO!

Public voices highway concerns

Cutting up farmland, noise from traffic top criticisms of planned eastside route

By M.K. Guetersloh
mkguetersloh@pantagraph.com

NORMAL — Jeanne Bozarth doesn't want to see four lanes of traffic cutting through her family's farmland, while Bruce Naffziger dreads the noise a proposed eastside highway will bring to his neighborhood.

Bozarth and Naffziger, both of Bloomington, were among the 60 area residents who attended a public meeting Thursday on the proposed highway that would connect Interstate 55 near Towan-

da with Interstate 74 near Downs. The open house at Normal Community High School, 3900 E. Raab Road, was the last public meeting on the proposed eastside highway for at least a year.

The public comments collected at the meeting — and others that can be submitted until Jan. 27 — will be included in a purpose and needs report that the Champaign engineering firm Clark Dietz will file with the Federal Highway Administration next month. Clark Dietz will collect public comment through the website set up for this

project, www.eastsidehighway.com.

"We have good roads already and we need to make those better," Bozarth said. "I just don't believe the growth is going to happen like they think it will, and this road will take good farm ground out of production."

Naffziger said he moved to The Grove on Kickapoo Creek, an eastside subdivision, two years ago because it is a quiet neighborhood. The proposed highway would be less than half a mile from The Grove.

"I think the projections for growth are too optimistic," Naffziger said. "And where they are planning on putting it — a half-

mile from Towanda Barnes Road — is too close to a major road." Naffziger's neighbor Rod Merkle agreed.

"Towanda Barnes serves the area just fine," Merkle said. "We don't need more roads. We need to take care of the roads we have."

Mboka Mwilambwe of Bloomington said he still is studying the proposed highway and has not made a decision about it.

"I wanted to learn more about this project because with something of this magnitude it is not only going to affect me in my neighborhood but the whole community," said Mwilambwe, who lives in the Eagle Creek subdivision.

Jerry Payonk from Clark Dietz said the study will look at the general area east of Towanda Barnes Road as suggested in the corridor study completed last year, as well as other possible routes east of Bloomington-Normal.

Clark Dietz is completing the four-year environmental study on the proposed eastside highway. Payonk said the \$13 million study will determine an exact alignment for the highway.

Federal funds are paying for the environmental study.

Engineers have estimated that if the highway is approved it could be 20 years before it is completed and cost at least \$200 million.

East-side highway corridor sites under review

JUNE 06, 2011 10:23 PM • [BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM](#)

NORMAL — Residents likely will know what proposed east-side highway corridors will be studied further by late this summer.

Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz, a Champaign engineering firm, brought the Normal City Council up to date Monday night one year into a four-year environmental assessment required by the Federal Highway Administration.

The assessment looks at the potential impact a proposed highway site would have on such things as water quality, natural areas, threatened and endangered species, wetlands, air quality and prime farmland.

Payonk said the list of potential sites would be narrowed to a preferred choice by next spring. That would undergo further analysis to reach a “finding of no significant impact” report for the FHA by spring 2014.

Once the best location is determined, local officials can begin purchasing the land for the project, he said.

The proposed highway would run east of the Twin Cities and likely connect Interstate 55 near Towanda to Interstate 74 near Downs.

Councilman Jeff Fritzen said he “never sensed much consensus that there is a need” for the highway.

Payonk said the idea is to accommodate expected growth by 2035, and it would be cheaper to buy the land now than to wait until the growth happens.

East-side highway routes concern residents

AUGUST 18, 2011 9:03 PM • BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM

NORMAL — One of the 33 remaining options for a proposed east-side highway goes right over Carol Gose's house in the Lamplighter subdivision near Towanda.

While Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz, the engineering firm heading a study on the proposed roadway, assured the 75 of so people who attended an open house Thursday night that a highway would not split the Lamplighter subdivision, Gose was still concerned.

"I would still have a highway out my front door," she said.

Gose said she wouldn't use the road to get to her job at Country Financial. She prefers to use Towanda Barnes. The proposed highway that would connect to Interstate 55 to the north and Interstate 74 to the south, would "Just be for people who wanted to go around the town," she said.

Fellow Lamplighter subdivision resident Skip Nelson shared Gose's concerns.

"I'm here to find out more information, particularly a timetable," said Nelson, who has lived in the subdivision about 23 years.

Payonk said the plan is to have a final highway alignment by 2014. In the meantime, a community working group will help continue to narrow down the alternatives. The list already has been narrowed from 116 to 33 after looking at the effects possible locations might have on such things as agriculture, residences, business, environment and flood plains within 500 feet.

There are three possible main locations — just east of Towanda Barnes Road, by County Road 2000 East and near county Road 2100 East — and a number of combinations to connect to the interstates.

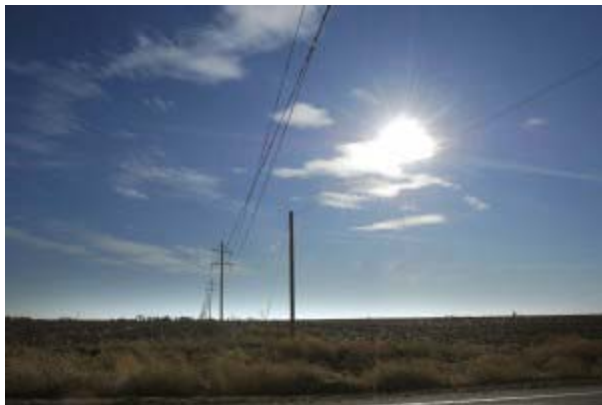
Scott Douglas said two of the options fall close to his residence in The Grove subdivision.

"Right now it's a beautiful farm," he said.

Douglas wonders if now is the time to spend money on a road project and if it's really advantageous to cut off The Grove to the rest of the city. He's also concerned about the impact of noise and truck fumes on the subdivision.

Payonk said next step is to narrow the alternatives to a "handful." Another public meeting will take place in December or January.

East side highway down to four proposed options



JANUARY 07, 2012 7:00 AM • BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM

BLOOMINGTON -- What started out as 129 possible alternatives for a proposed east side highway have been narrowed to four, and residents will again have a chance to offer their input at a public informational meeting.

The session will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at Normal Community High School.

At the last public meeting in August, three possible main locations -- just east of Towanda Barnes Road, by County Road 2000 East and near County Road 2100 East -- and a number of combinations to connect the proposed highway to Interstate 55 to the north and Interstate 74 to the south were presented.

The main locations are about 8 miles long. The entire proposed highway is about 12 miles long. Estimates have put the cost of building the highway at \$200 to \$300 million. The need for the highway is based on a 2035 land-use plan and the anticipated growth on the Twin Cities' east side with an eye toward relieving traffic congestion, especially along Veterans Parkway.

Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz, the engineering firm heading the study, said the option near County Road 2100 East has been eliminated since the August meeting.

Several residents of the nearby Lamplighter subdivision had expressed concerns over that option because it was so close to the subdivision. One of the proposed I-55 connection alternatives actually went over resident Carol Gose's house. That alternative also was just east of Benjamin Elementary School on the south end.

"It's almost impossible to develop an alternative that would completely not affect anyone ... but farmland and residential areas are primary screening criteria," Payonk said this week.

Of the remaining two proposed main locations, the one near County Road 2000 East is just west of The Grove subdivision.

The other alternative is about a half mile east of Towanda Barnes and would run close to Eagle View and Eagle View South subdivisions on the north and Towanda Barnes business park near the middle.

Both of these alternatives would connect to Towanda Barnes on the south between Cheney's Grove Road and U.S. 150 and continue southwest between the Downs interchange and the Main Street interchange to eventually connect to Interstate 74.

At the north end of the two main routes, there are two alternatives to connect the proposed

highway to Interstate 55: one by way of Northown Road; the other by way of Ziebarth Road.

"One of the hardest things is that we're talking about something that doesn't happen next year -- it's five, 10, 15 or 20 years away, or it may never be built," said Mike Matejka, one of several residents who are part of the Community Working Group part of the study.

The group has met seven times over about three years to consider all the options. Its input and public comments are among the information sources used to narrow down the alternatives.

Even though such a highway wouldn't be built for several more years, Matejka said the process of choosing an option gives everyone a head's up so decisions can be made on what to -- or not to build -- around a possible east side highway location.

Under the study timeline, the next step is to narrow the alternatives to a single "preferred alternative" and then seek a "finding of no significant impact" from a host of departments, including the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resources in spring 2014.

Highway meeting

What: East Side Highway public informational meeting

When: 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday (identical presentations at 6:10 and 7:10 p.m.)

Where: Normal Community High School, 3900 E. Raab Road, Normal

Meeting on highway options draws 400

JANUARY 11, 2012 9:58 PM • BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM

NORMAL — More than 400 people attended an informational meeting on the proposed east-side highway Wednesday night, and many expressed concerns with the remaining four possible locations.

“We moved to The Grove because it was quiet, family-oriented and safe,” said Erica Roehm. “With this, I’ll look out my window and see a fence by a freeway. Our subdivision will be isolated from town.

“I am for the no-build option,” she said of the proposed road that would connect to Interstate 55 at its north end and I-74 at its south end on the Twin Cities’ east side.

The highway could run just to the west of The Grove, and there also could be an interchange right by the southeast Bloomington subdivision.

Peggy Miles, Dale Strain and Craig Fisher had similar concerns for their Eagle View neighborhood, which lies just west of the proposed east-side highway locations about a half-mile east of Towanda Barnes Road.

“The highway would be 820 feet from the edge of our neighborhood,” said Miles.

She also fears it would hinder the chances of the neighborhood getting a 14.5-acre park at the southeast corner of the subdivision.

Bloomington has received a \$400,000 grant to help develop the park, but the city would need to come up with the rest of the money (about \$600,000), according to Bloomington Alderman Jim Fruin, who also attended the meeting.

“The park was a big selling point for us,” said Miles.

Fisher said the only park option for kids in the subdivision is Bittner Park, which is across the busy Towanda Barnes Road.

The park issue aside, Miles is concerned about potential health consequences from having a freeway and all of its traffic so close to the neighborhood.

Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz, the engineering firm leading the study on a proposed east-side highway, told the crowd during a presentation at the meeting that a freeway would be the best alternative to address traffic.

A freeway would be like an interstate and only have on and off access through ramps.

Fisher said the proposed highway isn’t only an east-side concern. If built, it would give Interstate 55 traffic a way to totally bypass the Twin Cities and get to Interstate 74. That, Fisher said,

would have a tremendous impact on west-side businesses that depend on truck traffic and other travelers.

As proposed the east-side highway is being eyed to alleviate future traffic congestion on other north-south roads such as Veterans Parkway when Twin City growth spreads even farther to the east.

Two alternatives remain to connect to I-55: by way of Zeibarth Road or by way of Northtown Road. The south connection to I-74 has been narrowed to one, starting between Cheney's Grove Road and U.S. 150 and continuing southwest between the Downs interchange and the Main Street interchange to eventually connect to I-74.

While the narrowed-down choices have eliminated a proposed route that went through parts of Lamplighter subdivision, resident Brian Bogner still has questions and wonders if the proposed highway really will solve traffic problems.

"I don't see the value of using it to get to State Farm (where he is employed)," he said. "It would take me almost two miles out of my way."

The fact that it would be built to freeway standards makes it even less attractive, he said, because there would be limited access points.

"To flow traffic into town, the freeway option limits who would use it," he said.

Proposed highway, park grant among citizen's forum topics

FEBRUARY 16, 2012 10:08 PM • [BY RACHEL WELLS | RWELLS@PANTAGRAPH.COM](#)

BLOOMINGTON — Street resurfacing, a proposed east-side highway and a soon-to-expire park grant likely will be hot topics Monday as the city hosts a Citizens Voice forum for residents' concerns.

The open forum will be 6 to 7:30 p.m. Monday at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts. City Manager David Hales, department representatives and elected officials will be present, and residents will be allowed three to five minutes of speaking time each.

Hales said the city has seen a spike in emails and calls about the proposed east-side highway and the proposed Eagle View Park, which is a good indicator those topics will arise at Monday's forum.

The City Council would like to hear other concerns, or praises, too, but the winter so far has been quiet, said Ward 1 Alderman Bernie Anderson, who with Ward 5 Alderman Jennifer McDade helped structure the Citizens Voice meetings.

"I probably have not had a (constituent) phone call in over 30 days," he said. Usually winters are full of complaints about snowplowing and street salting, but the mild winter means residents' minds are elsewhere, Anderson said.

But budget decisions are just around the corner, making Monday's meeting a good time to influence aldermen on their priorities, McDade said.

East-side highway hot topic at meeting

FEBRUARY 20, 2012 9:21 PM • BY RACHEL WELLS | RWELLS@PANTAGRAPH.COM

BLOOMINGTON — East-side development issues were center stage Monday as residents took advantage of Bloomington's last Citizens Voice meeting before aldermen receive a recommended budget proposal.

First instituted in 2010, the city's Citizens Voice meetings allow residents to speak on any topics they'd like while elected officials, the city manager and department heads stand by to answer questions or offer clarification.

About 70 people attended Monday's session, which was dominated by opponents of a proposed east-side highway and proponents of a new east side park, Eagle View Park.

"People commute regularly without a problem," said Jeanne Merkle, a resident of the Grove subdivision who moved to the area in 2008 without any knowledge of the highway proposal that has been under study for years. "It would destroy our view and peace and quiet."

Others called for the city to capitalize this year on a \$400,000 grant awarded by the state for a new park that would expire at the end of 2012. The park would cost the city an additional \$600,000.

City Manager David Hales gave no indication as to whether he would include the park in his recommended fiscal year 2013 budget, which he will propose to aldermen during their March 12 meeting.

Already the park would face at least some opposition — Ward 1 Alderman Bernie Anderson, who represents older parts of the city, said after the meeting the expenditure is "a sensitive issue" and that he doesn't believe the city has enough money to pay for the park.

Aldermen also heard comments about deteriorating streets, unfunded pension liabilities and the cost of recent residential developments.

Speaking after the event, resident Tim Fenton said Monday's meeting was the first Citizens Voice event he'd attended.

"It was really informative," he said, noting that he hadn't heard about the east-side highway. "I'll definitely be back."

Sorensen: Businesses should back east-side highway

OCTOBER 04, 2012 6:23 PM • [BY LENORE SOBOTA | LSOBOTA@PANTAGRAPH.COM](#)

BLOOMINGTON — McLean County Board Chairman Matt Sorensen called for more vocal support from businesses for construction of an east-side highway.

“The project needs the support of the local business community,” Sorensen told those attending the McLean County Chamber of Commerce’s State of McLean County meeting Thursday morning.

Charlie Moore, president and chief executive officer of the chamber, said after the meeting that the chamber’s board has had discussions on the highway project, but has not taken a stand on it.

“We endorsed the further study” of the project, Moore said, including the needs assessment. He expects the matter to return to the board as it progresses.

Sorensen told the gathering that, while there is room for debate on where the highway should go and how many lanes it should have, “in my opinion, there is no room for debate on the need. The need is there.”

He said, “We’re not looking at a solution to a problem in 2012. We’re looking at a project to solve a problem in 2040 and beyond.”

Also speaking at the event were Bloomington Mayor Steve Stockton and Normal Mayor Chris Koos, who gave generally upbeat assessments of their cities emerging from the recession.

Sorensen was a bit more pessimistic, noting that county government does not have the same resources — such as sales tax revenue — that Bloomington and Normal have as home-rule cities. Instead, county government relies primarily on real estate taxes and, “for the first time since 1985, overall assessed valuation is going down in the county,” he said.

Stockton pointed positively to progress being made with road resurfacing and other infrastructure improvement in Bloomington.

Looking forward, Stockton said it’s important to add wells to diversify and expand the city’s water system, which the mayor described as “essentially a regional system” that already supplies water to Hudson, Towanda, parts of Bloomington Township and larger users in Normal, such as Mitsubishi Motors North America and AdvocateBroMenn Regional Medical Center.

Koos cited a “healthy increase” in construction activity among signs that Normal is recovering from the recession.

He said improvements in uptown Normal have “been more than we hoped for” and called the projects “another example of the community working on a common cause for the common good.”

Koos said the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center is doing better than expected and the Uptown Crossing building, anchored by CVS, just filled its last vacancy.

Editorial: Time for your opinions on east-side highway

JUNE 19, 2013 7:00 AM • [BY THE PANTAGRAPH EDITORIAL BOARD](#)

It could be years before dirt is moved, but tonight's the night if you want to sound off on the controversial east-side highway project.

Engineers will present two alternative routes during a public meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. at Normal Community High School. Identical presentations will be at 6:10 p.m. and 7:10 p.m.

Both alternatives will detail the effects on residential areas, farmland, businesses and existing roads.

The proposed locations are a half-mile east of Towanda-Barnes Road and the other a mile east of Towanda-Barnes, following County Road 2000 East.

"One option impacts more businesses; one impacts more homes," said Jerry Payonk, an engineer with the Champaign firm of Clark Dietz.

The highway, to be built to freeway standards, would in essence provide a fast-moving way to connect Interstate 55 to Interstate 74 as the Twin Cities continue to grow to the east. Ziebarth Road is the likely northern connection to I-55, since Northtown Road already has been eliminated as an option, with the connection to I-74 located halfway between Downs and U.S. 51.

The 12-mile proposed project comes with a price tag of between \$200 million and \$300 million, and it has not been funded.

That alone will extend the process and funding discussions likely won't move forward until the federal agencies — Federal Highway Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, etc. — sign off on the project.

In western Illinois, discussion about the Corridor 67 project started in the 1970s and the job still isn't done.

But ask about the 220-mile project from Rock Island to Alton and you'll hear not only about the funding problems, but also about the care taken in designing the road to avoid problems.

Building roads is an expensive and time-consuming proposition, but public feedback and participation are crucial.

Take advantage of tonight's meeting to make sure your concerns are addressed.

East-side highway still has doubters

JUNE 19, 2013 9:45 PM • BY RACHEL WELLS |
RWELLS@PANTAGRAPH.COM



BLOOMINGTON — Two options remain for the path of a proposed east-side highway, and each would have a different impact on farms, businesses and residences, but many people at an informational meeting Wednesday remained opposed to the overall idea.

Jerry Payonk of the engineering firm Clark Dietz outlined the two alternatives and an environmental assessment of them during the meeting attended by more than 150 people at Normal Community High School.

The two options both would connect at the north to Interstate 55 at Ziebarth Road and at the southern end to Interstate 74 at a spot halfway between Downs and U.S. 51. One route is half a mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and the other is a mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and follows McLean County Road 2000 East.

“I understand growth; it’s just hard when you’re the casualty of growth,” said Mark Savage, who said he’s lived for about 15 years near Fort Jesse Road. He and his wife, Jill, said they believe they would lose their home with either option.

If they are correct, their home would be one of 18 residences that would be displaced by the more western route or one of 13 residences that would be displaced by the more eastern route.

The more western route also would displace seven businesses, but the more eastern route would not affect any.

The summary of the environmental assessment will be available Thursday at eastsidehighway.com.

The first route would eliminate 777 acres of “prime and important” farmland, and the second would eliminate about 794 acres of such land.

It’s the farmland that Rob Sutter took issue with. His family has farmed nearby the proposed highway since about 1934.

“It (the land) means a heck of a lot more to people than any monetary value,” he said.

Payonk said the proposed project has no funding beyond the environmental assessment, but

planning for an east-side highway now is essential.

Residents can submit comments on the two alternatives through July 3 by emailing ESHEA@clarkdietz.com. Comments will help determine the “preferred option” and will be included in information sent to the Federal Highway Administration, which must approve the project.

Mixed reactions to 2 Eastside Highway proposals

8:39PM Wednesday

June 19, 2013



Reaction to the final two proposed locations of the Eastside Highway was mixed Wednesday night at a public input meeting at Normal Community High School. (Stephanie Pawlowski/WJBC)

By Stephanie Pawlowski

NORMAL - About 200 people attended a pair of open meetings Wednesday night on the proposed route of the Eastside Highway in McLean County.

The organizers are down to two options, a highway that goes a half mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and another that's a full mile east of Towanda Barnes. The route would start at Interstate 74 on the south end and go to Interstate 55 on the north end. The highway will go over some of the roads it intersects, such as the interstates, and under others.

A feasibility study was ordered for the highway in 2002 to connect Interstates 55 and 74 on the east side of Bloomington-Normal. Reactions were mixed to the final two proposals. Chip Ester said he's concerned with who is proposing the Eastside Highway and why.

"There's no disclosure of who stands to gain the most. They have all these slides about who will be affected, but what they're not showing you is all the people who stand to gain from this," Ester said. "Because, a \$300 million project that the community doesn't necessarily want doesn't have inertia unless there are people pushing for it, and who are those people?"

Bill Jenson said he thinks the project is necessary given the projected growth of Bloomington-Normal in 30 years.

"Anything that we can do to relieve some of that inner-belt congestion I think is a good thing. It's good that they're doing their homework and doing a very thorough study on it," Jensen said.

Susan Luke, who lives in Downs, said she was concerned about the final proposals because earlier plans put the route through Downs.

"I wish they would have built Towanda Barnes Road to be able to accommodate this type of traffic instead of having to essentially build another Towanda Barnes and consume farm land and people's private property," Luke said.

Meta Mickens-Baker, a Unit 5 school board member, said she thought the highway would end up further east, because the current sites are next to residential areas.

"I'm curious as to how much time it's going to take to build up the underpasses and the construction period. That looks like it could be pretty extensive," Mickens-Baker said.

The public can still read about the final two proposals at eastsidehighway.com and submit comments. Jerry Payonk of engineering firm Clark Dietz said the public comments will be taken until July 3.

"After that, we compile all the information. I'm sure we'll get many questions or comments and we'll compress all of those, you'll be able to download that from the website after it has been summarized," Payonk said. "Then we present it to the Federal Highway Administration and say, 'This is what we think the preferred alternative should be.' That's done in September."

Payonk said if the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Department of Agriculture all sign off on a route, the engineering will be completed for the project.

Payonk said there's no funding for the project, and even if there were it would take several months to work on design plans. Plus, he said the county has to get rights of way and do construction preparation. Payonk said actual construction on the highway could be as much as 15 years away.

[Stephanie Pawlowski can be reached at Stephanie@wjbc.com](mailto:Stephanie@wjbc.com)

Tags:

- [Eastside Highway](#)

Proposed Eastside Highway options narrowed for McLean County residents

Originally printed at <http://www.cinewsnow.com/news/local/Proposed-eastside-highway-options-narrowed-for-McLean-Co-residents-212254541.html>

By Audrey Wise
June 19, 2013

NORMAL, Ill. -- Residents in McLean County are reviewing the final two options to a proposed roadway that would run around the east side of Bloomington-Normal.

Engineers have been studying the Eastside Highway project for several years now and have narrowed more than 100 potential routes down to two.

The proposals would connect at Interstate 74 near Downs, then cross over Interstate 55 and connect to Ziebarth Road in Normal.

Project manager Jerry Payonk said this roadway will help with access to projected growth in the area, not act as a bypass.

"You'll have easier access to Fort Jesse, GE, Empire, Cheney's Grove Road, Ireland Grove Road, I-74 and I-55, but it will have very little benefit as a bypass," said Payonk.

Mike Virlee lives near the Ziebarth portion of the proposed roadway.

"I understand the need for future planning, but as I look at both of the proposals, I'm wondering why they're going to run a parallel road to the current 55, which just added a third lane about two years ago," he said.

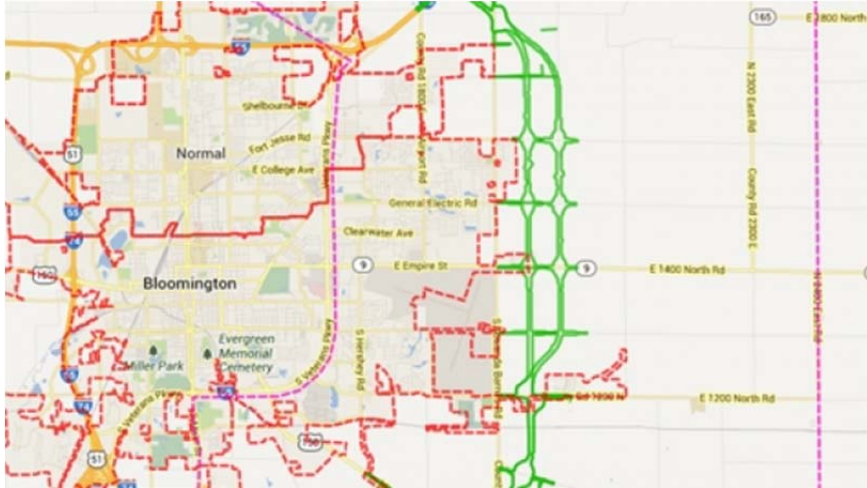
Project leaders want public input before they submit a preferred route to the Federal Highway Administration at the end of next year.

No funding is secured for the next phases, including final design, land acquisition and construction.

Eastside highway engineers will respond to public comments

7:15AM Sunday

July 7, 2013



The final two proposed routes of the eastside highway (in green) are placed a half mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and a full mile east of Towanda Barnes Road. (Photo from eastsidehighway.com)

By Stephanie Pawlowski

BLOOMINGTON - The public comment period on the final two options for an east side highway has closed, and soon the public will get some responses.

Jerry Payonk of engineering firm Clark Dietz said a lot of comments were made, some supportive of the project, some against the project and some people offering their choice between a proposed route that goes a half mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and the other that goes a full mile east.

He said those comments will be compiled and engineers will respond to each one.

"And that might take a little time because we received numerous ones and we want to be detailed in our responses," Payonk said. "Some responses are very similar, so we'll put them into groups perhaps. So, it might be a couple of weeks before we get responses back to the public."

Payonk said not everyone offered a return addresses on the comments. He said the next step is presenting a preferred alternative to the Federal Highway Administration in September.

"They are going to want to know how the public weighed in, so we will have where they weighted in, which alternative they preferred and which alternative they didn't prefer," Payonk said.

The next step after that won't come until 2014.

An eastside highway was first eyed by the Regional Planning Commission in the early 1990's as developments were growing on the east side. Payonk said McLean County is one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois outside of Chicago and the collar counties.

Stephanie Pawlowski can be reached at Stephanie@wjbc.com

Meeting Tuesday to discuss east side highway project

AUGUST 12, 2013 5:50 PM • [BY PANTAGRAPH STAFF](#)

BLOOMINGTON — Some east side Bloomington residents have organized a meeting to discuss the proposed east-side highway project with elected officials.

The meeting is open to the public and will take place at 6 p.m. tonight at Holiday Inn and Suites, 3202 E. Empire St., across from the Central Illinois Regional Airport.

District 10 McLean County Board members Ben Owens and Chuck Erickson and County Board Chairman Matt Sorensen have been invited, as well as Bloomington City Council aldermen Jim Fruin, Rob Fazzini and Mboka Mwilambwe and Mayor Tari Renner.

The meeting will include a panel discussion.

The location of the proposed east-side highway has been narrowed to two alternatives: one a half-mile east of Towanda Barnes Road and the other a mile east of Towanda Barnes Road following County Road 2000 East. The road would connect to Interstate 55 on the north by Ziebarth Road and to Interstate 74 on the south at a location halfway between Downs and U.S. 51.

Clark Dietz, the Champaign engineering firm, collected public comments in June. The comments will be used to determine a “preferred option” and will be included with information sent to the Federal Highway Administration in September. The FHA and other federal agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Natural Resources will review the materials and decide if they concur with the “preferred option.”

FHA approval is needed for the project, designed to alleviate future traffic congestion on north-south roads such as Veterans Parkway. Construction costs have been estimated between \$200 million and \$300 million. There currently is no funding for the project.

East-side highway foes voice objections

AUGUST 13, 2013 10:07 PM • BY KEVIN BARLOW | KBARLOW@PANTAGRAPH.COM |

BLOOMINGTON — As a lifelong resident of McLean County and a semi-retired farmer living on a centennial farm in the family since 1888, Frank Wieting has seen growth on Bloomington's east side over the years.

He was one of about 75 residents who attended a public hearing at the Bloomington Holiday Inn and Suites Tuesday night for a panel discussion on a proposed east-side highway project. Like most in attendance, Wieting opposed the project.

"In the last hundreds of years, when has one new acre of land been produced?" he said. "We can build houses and we can build factories and we can build highways, but we cannot build more land. I think it's a crime against nature to consider tearing up land for this highway."

The proposed highway would connect to Interstate 55 on the north by Ziebarth Road and to Interstate 74 on the south between Downs and U.S. 51. Two alternatives are being considered and several governing bodies, including the Bloomington, Normal and McLean County will have an advisory vote on the final plan.

"Bloomington-Normal is physically the size of San Francisco," said Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner. "San Francisco has 700,000 people and we have 100,000 people, but in the same size of an area they have. I don't necessarily think we will get federal money, and I think that is also the case for Springfield. I am not convinced that it is necessary and I am concerned about the long-term consequences for our city and I cannot support this at this time."

Sorensen backs highway

County Board Chairman Matt Sorensen said he feels the area needs to move forward with planning for its transportation needs and supports the proposed project.

"I can't imagine Bloomington-Normal without Veterans Parkway and I look at this project that way," he said. "I do not know whether or not this is exactly the right corridor, but the engineers who have studied this believe it is, so I have to take that on faith."

East-side resident Jim Landrus said any decision to move forward with the project would decrease the value of homes in several subdivisions that would be affected by the project.

Construction costs have been estimated at around \$350 million, and before any votes are taken, the McLean County Board, Bloomington City Council and Normal City Council would meet in a joint session to discuss the proposed plan, Sorensen said.

Panelists discuss Eastside Highway with public

9:18PM Tuesday

August 13, 2013



Panelists heard public concerns about a possible Eastside Highway. (Adam Studzinski/WJBC)

By Adam Studzinski

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County officials, along with various city representatives, held a panel discussion on Tuesday to hear from the public, and answer questions about the controversial Eastside Highway proposal.

There is nothing remotely set in stone yet, and according to Public Works Director Jim Karch the project will not even happen if growth on the eastside does not continue the way it has been.

"If we all the sudden became a community that started shrinking, the Eastside Highway would not be done," said Karch.

Bloomington resident Jeff Prella said he does not believe the growth will happen, mainly because the major business in Bloomington aren't growing.

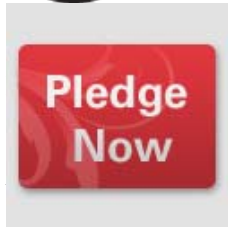
"What you're looking at is the maximum amount of people you can employ really determines the maximum amount your population can grow," Prella said. "That depends on where each business is at in their life cycle. State Farm is in a very mature state, Country Financial is in a mature state, Bridgestone is in a mature state, Mitsubishi is in a mature state. There's not a single one in growth."

A major concern from the public has been the effect the possible highway would have on residences in the area. However, resident Frank Wieting said farmland would be effected as well.

"We can build houses, we can build factories, we can build highways, but we can't produce mother natures land," Wieting said. "I think it's a crime against creation to even consider tearing this up for a highway."

McLean County Board Chairman Matt Sorenson believes what they need to do is get the right-of-way for where the highway would go. That way, if they do go through with it, future residents will know about the potential for the roadway.

Adam Studzinski can be reached at adam.studzinski@cumulus.com



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East side residents of Bloomington Normal have given elected officials an earful of opposition to the proposed East Side Highway Project in a hotel that was itself farmland a decade ago. A years long environmental assessment of the proposal to connect I-55 and I-74 from Towanda to Downs is drawing to a close and the Mclean County Board and area City Councils could vote on a preferred alignment for the proposed highway late this year or early next. During a citizens forum off East Empire street, Attorney Hal Jennings said he is very unhappy and he knew nothing about the westernmost alignment that would take some homes in his subdivision and devalue the rest.

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"It's going to cost a fortune just for one subdivision in condemnation fees. And I guarantee you that since there is a bunch of lawyers including me living out there, we'll be in front of a condemnation jury until who laid the rail."

The issue has been studied for nearly 20 years and has failed before. Supporters of the process say if they don't choose a possible route now, growth will continue to happen and even more residents will be unhappy when traffic loads indicate the road should be built. But, Harvest Pointe Subdivision resident Brian Stratman says even choosing an alignment is harmful.

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"The vote itself and making a decision now when we don't know whether it's going to happen in the future or not, but making a decision as to which option is going to happen if it does happen, that will decrease the value of our homes immediately because people won't want to come to live in these homes when they know there is a possibility a highway will be built right through the middle of it."

Supporters of the project note that if elected officials choose a preferred route in votes late this year or early in 2014, they could also pass disclosure rules that would force realtors and developers to tell buyers of the potential road and avoid the surprise some current east side residents had when news of the highway study resurfaced.

Bruce Naffziger lives in the Grove subdivision in Bloomington which would be affected by the westernmost of three remaining possible road alignments. Naffziger said the progress of the study has lagged behind the houses on the ground.

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In 1994 if they had drawn these lines, I don't think these would have been issues. But, the horse is out of the barn. And you can't say now it's your tough luck. We're just going to stick it here because that's what we want to do, because we should have planned better."

Supporters of the planning process say if elected officials kill off the studies again, the same situation will happen another ten or twenty years in the future when the need for a new road connecting Downs and Towanda and Interstates 55 and 74 becomes dire. Two of the three potential remaining routes for the highway do not impact current development, though elected officials and east side residents say at the pace of construction that could change soon. Even if it gains approval on the local level construction of the potentially \$350 million project is 15 to 20 years away.

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Announcement Monday on 'preferred' option for east-side highway

SEPTEMBER 24, 2013 7:00 PM • [BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM](#)

BLOOMINGTON — A list of 129 routes for a proposed east-side highway has been narrowed to one “preferred” option after more than three years of study, and it will be announced Monday during a joint meeting of the Bloomington and Normal city councils and McLean County Board.

It's the first joint meeting of the three government entities since 2009. Other items on the agenda include a presentation of a McLean County Regional Planning Commission public participation plan and an update on the Bloomington-Normal Area Economic Development Council's economic development incentive programs.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in room 400 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington St. in downtown Bloomington.

Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz, the Champaign engineering firm heading the east-side highway study, will summarize what has occurred so far in the study and announce the preferred location as determined by consultants and the project study group with public input.

The 12-mile east-side highway has been eyed to alleviate future traffic congestion on existing north-south roads such as Veterans Parkway when Twin City growth spreads farther east.

In June, the possible locations had been narrowed to two: one a half-mile east of Towanda Barnes Road; the other a mile east of Towanda Barnes following McLean County Road 2000 East.

The highway would connect to Interstate 55 on the north by Ziebarth Road. The southern connection to Interstate 74 would be halfway between Downs and U.S. 51.

“We've never said the east-side highway needs to be built,” Payonk said.

Instead, he said, this process would preserve a proposed corridor and alert anyone considering building in that corridor of its possible fate.

“If it's not preserved, the impact would be greater,” he said.

After Bloomington aldermen, Normal council members and McLean County Board members have a chance to weigh in on the proposed “preferred” location, Payonk said, it will be filed with the Federal Highway Administration in mid-November.

The proposal will be reviewed by a variety of federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Natural Resources. If those agencies concur with the preferred location, Payonk said, Clark Dietz would wrap up its environmental assessment and complete a design report to determine a cost for the

project.

Initial cost estimates were between \$200 million and \$300 million.

Ultimately the proposed corridor would be included in the McLean County comprehensive plan, which would need approval from the Bloomington and Normal city councils and the McLean County Board.

Joint government meeting

What: Joint meeting of the Bloomington and Normal city councils and McLean County Board

When: 7 p.m. Monday

Where: Room 400, Government Center, 115 E. Washington St., Bloomington

Agenda: Discussion of preferred location for a proposed east-side highway; presentation on McLean County Regional Planning Commission's public participation plan; update on Bloomington-Normal Area Economic Development Council's economic development incentive programs

Public participation: Those wishing to speak at the meeting must make a written request to McLean County Administrator Bill Wasson (bill.wasson@mcleancountyiil.gov) by the end of the day Thursday. (See County Board rules at mcleancountyiil.gov.)

Easternmost route favored for east-side highway

SEPTEMBER 27, 2013 5:15 PM • BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM

BLOOMINGTON — The “preferred option” for the east-side highway is a route that would follow McLean County Road 2000 East, about a mile east of Towanda Barnes Road.

The choice, which was released Friday, will be discussed at a joint meeting of the Bloomington and Normal city councils and the McLean County Board at 7 p.m. Monday in Room 400 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington St. While officials want to designate a specific route for planning purposes, the highway would be built only if growth shows a demand for it sometime in the future.

At a June public meeting, Jerry Payonk of the Champaign engineering firm Clark Dietz discussed the final two alternatives and the results of an environmental assessment of each. The other alternative was about a half mile east of Towanda Barnes Road.



“We considered a lot of different factors,” said Payonk of the final proposed choice.

Besides the engineering firm, the study included input from the public, a community working group and the project study group, which included engineers from Bloomington, Normal and McLean County governments.

The environmental study revealed 18 residences, 777 acres of “prime and important” farmland, 10 farm residences and seven businesses would be displaced by the more western route. In contrast, what is now the “pre-ferred option” would displace 13 residences, 794 acres of farmland, six farm residences and no businesses.

“Our recommendation is something that has less impact on residences and businesses,” he said. “To the pub-lic, those are big.”

Payonk said the proposed route closer to Towanda Barnes, for instance, would have had a major impact on Harvest Point subdivision as well as other residences on the east side.

While the alternative closest to Towanda Barnes Road would affect 0.71 acres of wetlands and the “preferred option” only 0.0003 acres of wetlands, representatives of Friends of Kickapoo Creek and the John Wesley Paul Audubon Society of Bloomington-Normal, prefer the more

western route, according to comments the groups submitted following the June meeting.

Angelo Capparella, conservation chairman of the John Wesley Paul Audubon Society, said the Clark Dietz study measured only the wetlands directly affected if a highway was built. The two environmental groups took a broader approach, he said.

The proposed route closer to Towanda Barnes Road would have less overall impact on The Grove wetland restoration and Kickapoo Creek because it is farther away, he said. The soil in the area of the "preferred option" is highly susceptible to erosion, he said, which would mean more sediment damage and more runoff.

"We are particularly concerned about impacts on The Grove Park via effects on the upstream unnamed tributaries to Kickapoo Creek..." he said.

Caparella said throughout his tenure on the community working group he asked what parameter was more important.

"This tells me," he said. "Business and residences are more important than farmland and the environment. That's unfortunate. Soil is the foundation of our economy."

Payonk said the highway only would be constructed when Twin City growth — and the accompanying traffic it would produce — showed a need.

"We want to protect the corridor if growth occurs," he said. "That's just good planning."

Joint meeting

What: Joint meeting of the Bloomington and Normal city councils and McLean County Board

When: 7 p.m. Monday

Where: Room 400, Government Center, 115 E. Washington St., Bloomington

Agenda: Discussion of preferred location for a proposed east-side highway; presentation on McLean County Regional Planning Commission's public participation plan; update on Bloomington-Normal Area Economic Development Council's economic development incentive programs.

Little support seen for east-side highway at meeting



SEPTEMBER 30, 2013 10:08 PM • BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM

BLOOMINGTON — About 100 people packed into the Government Center on Monday night for a joint meeting of the Bloomington and Normal city councils and McLean County Board and, in particular, a discussion of the proposed east-side highway.

Six people and representatives from two groups spoke, but only one offered total support of the proposed north-south highway that would run along

McLean County Road 2000 East on the east side of Bloomington-Normal.

“Many of my friends and colleagues think it’s a waste of money,” said Chris Gramm. “I think it’s a good idea to secure the land for the footprint should it go forward.”

Gramm said the highway, which has been under consideration since the first feasibility study in 1999, would provide easier access into the community. The current study of potential routes began three years ago.

But Tim Bittner, a fourth-generation farmer whose property would be affected by the proposed highway, strongly disagreed, saying, among other things, it would cause congestion on east-west roads and bring additional truck traffic.

Bittner said the study, which predicts rapid population growth by 2015 and estimated the highway would cost \$200 million to \$300 million — was based on different economic times.

“Now land acquisition costs are five times when the study started,” he said.

His son, Bart Bittner, a fifth-generation farmer, said the issue has been going on for years — his grandfather dealt with it.

“I don’t want my kids dealing with this issue,” he said. “How do we plan for our future? We’re held hostage.”

Jerry Payonk of the Champaign engineering firm Clark Dietz said that while the highway is not currently needed, the corridor needs to be preserved so anyone considering building in that area would know its possible fate.

But Mike Swartz of the McLean County Farm Bureau said there is no timeline or sunset.

“That restricts indefinitely the use and growth in the corridor,” he said.

The “preferred route” that was chosen after input by several groups and public comment, also

would result in the permanent loss of 794 acres of farmland, he said.

“I can’t imagine what it would feel like to be a farmer and be held hostage,” said County Board member Erik Rankin. “I felt for the Bittners as they spoke. This is somebody’s livelihood. I could never in good conscience vote to take a home away from another individual.”

Bloomington Alderman Scott Black said the data showing the future need for the highway “is not convincing a lot of folks” — including him.

County Board members Laurie Wollrab and Susan Schafer, Normal City Councilwoman Cheryl Gaines and Bloomington Alderman Rob Fazzini suggested the highway would just promote sprawl.

“Not one highway has decreased the need for more highways,” said Wollrab.

Added Schafer: “If we build an east-side highway, it’s not going to control sprawl — the land will be cheaper on the other side.”

Gaines expressed concern about taking traffic away from the center of the community.

“In Normal, we’ve worked hard to bring it to the center,” she said.

Allowing growth to spread, she said, also costs communities more money for fire stations, police stations and roads.

Fazzini asked Payonk if the highway would be needed if the same amount of growth that is predicted occurred within the community rather than farther east.

“Probably not,” said Payonk.

Because the meeting was a work session, no votes or motions were allowed. Payonk said the next step is to take the preferred option to the Federal Highway Administration for consideration. If it is accepted, the next step would be to design the highway and acquire land — both things that require money and won’t happen until there is a need.

“Even if we had funding and there was a need for the highway it would six to eight more years,” he said.

Feds sign off on east-side highway; hearing next



NOVEMBER 23, 2013 8:00 AM • BY MARY ANN FORD | MFORD@PANTAGRAPH.COM

BLOOMINGTON — The Federal Highway Administration and five federal agencies have concurred with the recommended, preferred option for a proposed east-side highway, allowing it to take the next step, a spring public hearing on the environmental assessment.

McLean County officials received word of the FHA decision Friday.

Jerry Payonk of Clark Dietz, the Champaign engineering firm conducting the highway study, said all property owners on the preferred route — along County Road 2000 East about a mile east of Towanda Barnes Road — will receive notification of the hearing.

A copy of the environmental assessment will be available on the east-side highway website before the public hearing.

Payonk said comments at the public hearing will be recorded and included with the next set of documents that will be sent to the FHA.

If the FHA and other federal departments make a “finding of no significant impact” for the route after reviewing that document, Payonk said, the project officially can start.

But, he said, that won’t happen until it is needed — and receives funding.

“The goal here is to preserve the corridor” for the potential highway, Payonk said.

McLean County Engineer Eric Schmitt said east-side development and traffic will be monitored to determine when the highway is needed. The 12-mile highway would be linked to Interstate 55 on the north and Interstate 74 on the south and has been eyed to alleviate traffic on other north-south roads such as Veterans Parkway.

Schmitt said the project currently only has about \$3 million from Illinois Jobs Now money. Cost of the total project has been estimated at about \$300 million.

After the study started about three years ago, 129 route options were considered for the proposed highway. The final preferred option was announced in September.