

**IDOT District 1, Will County
Caton Farm- Bruce Road
Environmental Assessment
Project Update**

This was the fourth NEPA/404 presentation of this project. It was last presented on November 14, 2006 with a follow-up meeting with USFWS on January 9, 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to review:

- Studies and Findings to Date
- Status of Merger Process
- Outcome of Public Involvement
- Other Coordination Activities
- Outstanding Environmental Issues
- Next Steps

The consultant opened the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Purpose and Need for the project as well as the analysis of various alternatives. Concurrence Point #2 was reached in January 2007 with the recommendation that six alternatives would be carried forward for further studies and presented to the public for comment. These alternatives included:

- Caton Farm – Bruce – Gougar Alignment
- Caton Farm – Bruce – Middle Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce – Gougar Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce – Middle Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Gougar Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Middle Alignment

Two public information meetings were held in June 2007. Although clear support was expressed for a new river crossing, there was no consensus for a specific crossing location or for the north-south (Gougar or Middle) alignment.

Following the public meeting further coordination was held with the City of Crest Hill, the City of Lockport and various property owners to try to address specific concerns regarding design features that were raised at the public meetings.

In October 2008, the consultant team recommended to the County and Transportation Corridor Committee the Caton Farm-Oak-Bruce-Middle alignment as the preferred alternative.

At that time the City of Lockport, which had previously supported the Middle Alignment, expressed a change in position and asked that the Cedar Road Alignment be reevaluated. The Cedar Road alignment had been officially dropped at Concurrence Point #2 in January 2007. Several coordination meetings were held with the City of Lockport to try to resolve this issue. The City of Lockport has recently stated that they will not oppose the Middle Alignment but they will not protect the corridor from conflicting development.

On May 19, 2009, the Transportation Corridor Committee reached a consensus that the Caton Farm – Oak - Bruce – Middle Alignment should be pursued as the preferred alternative. The Will County Administration also supports this alternative and it is anticipated that a resolution will be passed by the County Board to this effect at a July meeting.

The meeting then turned to discussion of the status of the Hines emerald dragonfly studies.

USFWS (Cirton) stated that no additional larval surveys are necessary for this project. There is no suitable habitat located south of the treatment plant. However, additional adult studies need to be completed for the entire area of the potential river crossings including the one located in Dellwood Park West.

IDOT (Dees) questioned if that large of area would need to be done since the preferred alignment avoids Dellwood Park West. USFWS stated the studies would still need to be completed. However, USFWS agreed that studies were not necessary on the island in the Des Plaines River.

IDOT (Dees) stated that the HED surveys will start soon and the consultant agreed to a field meeting to clearly identify the locations of the potential river crossing corridors.

USEPA (West) asked if the consultant was aware of the rail line connection that is proposed by the Canadian National (CN) Railway between the EJ&E rail line which runs south of the proposed roadway alignment and the CN rail line that parallels the Des Plaines River. These two rail lines cross with a grade separation structure, however, the CN proposes to connect them with a flyover to allow the interchange of rail traffic. The consultant agreed to investigate this issue to see if there were any conflicts with the roadway project.

FHWA (Fuller) stated that FHWA and IDOT have agreed to meet with the County and representatives from the McNaughton developers to discuss impacts to their property.

It is anticipated that this project will be on the agenda for the February 2010 NEPA/404 Merger Meeting for Concurrence Point #3 – Selected Alternative.