

Minutes of Meeting

November 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Transportation Corridor Committee (TCC) Meeting
Caton Farm – Bruce Road Phase I Study

ATTENDANCE: See Attached Roster

Mr. Gould (WCDOT) began the meeting by reviewing the latest meetings held for the project. In April 2015, a TCC meeting was held where several TCC members expressed concern for the "Middle Alignment" that was selected as the preferred alternative and what implications would come of opening the project to other alternatives. In July 2015, a meeting was held with IDOT and FHWA to discuss the project status and the concerns raised at the April TCC meeting.

Mr. Matkovic (CBBEL) then gave an update on the project from the consultant team. He discussed the July 2015 IDOT/FHWA meeting where the consultant team reviewed the project history, preferred river crossings, and alternatives carried forward at the 2007 public information meeting. Representatives of the FHWA noted this projects has followed the necessary steps to fulfill NEPA/404 Merger requirements and it would not be required to re-open the project to re-evaluate alternative alignments based on the concerns expressed. FHWA indicated if the project were to explore alternative alignments, it would be possible to do so, but would require previously achieved NEPA milestones to be revisited. Mr. Matkovic noted that much of the engineering work has been on hold pending the course of action for the project. A biological assessment is still ongoing for the impacts to the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Critical Habitat and the preferred alternative is nearing several design approvals from a geometric and drainage standpoint.

Mr. Gould mentioned the memorandum that summarizes the associated engineering costs of reevaluating alternatives for the project. He noted a discussion with the City of Lockport and approval from members of the TCC would be needed before any further action is taken by the Will County Board.

Mr. Benson (City of Lockport) raised a concern that the City of Lockport, the Village of Homer Glen, and the associated townships feel their voices have not been heard in relation to the selection of the preferred alternative. He felt there was a lack of a unanimous agreement when the preferred alternative was selected in 2009. Mr. Benson proposed to evaluate an interchange of Bruce Road at I-355. Traffic would then use the existing infrastructure of I-355 as part of the project corridor to head north and reach 159th Street instead of adding cost to the project to construct a new north-south roadway to the east of the interstate. Mayor Streit (City of Lockport) noted there was a willingness for communities to contribute to the cost associated with exploring alternatives, but requested WCDOT to contribute to the costs associated with plans

previously accounted for in the 2030 highway plan. Mr. Gould noted not all projects shown on the 2030 plan were to be undertaken by the County, but are shown as potential future and fiscally unconstrained projects needed to accommodate the anticipated growth in the area.

Mayor Streit noted the impact to economic potential in the Fairmont neighborhood as a result of this project. He noted the proposed noise walls diminish the development potential in the area and should be reevaluated. Ms. Kupkowski (WCDOT) stated that noise walls must be shown at potential mitigation locations, but ultimately are constructed based on votes from affected residents.

Mr. Gould addressed the issue of terminating the project at I-355. As discussed at the IDOT/FHWA meeting in July, redefining the project termini would require the project to start over and revisit the early milestones of the NEPA process. The logical termini defined for this project provide strategic regional arterial connections from Caton Farm Road west of U.S. Route 30 to 159th Street east of Cedar Road.

Alderman Deskin noted 2006 as a key year when Governor Ryan announced the I-355 Tollway would be constructed and became a feasible north-south route in the area. He noted this was not considered when alternative alignments were initially explored. Mr. Palmer (Will County) asked if there was an obstacle to using I-355 as a north-south connection to 159th Street because it is tolled. Mayor Streit requested a meeting of TCC members with IDOT, FHWA, and the Tollway to discuss the current policy and permitted actions for the project.

Mayor Baldermann (New Lenox) asked if selecting the alternative east of the Des Plaines River that follows Oak Avenue to Gougar Road to 159th Street would require the project to start over. Mr. Matkovic explained that this alternative was one of the six alternatives carried forward and would not require the project to start over, but would set the project back a few steps in the NEPA milestone timeline. This action would also incur costs associated with additional engineering studies. Alderman Deskin noted that both Gougar Road and Cedar Road are proposed to be 4 lane roadways in the 2030 plan and selecting the Oak-Gougar alternative would support this plan by using existing roadways. Ms. Kokodynsky (Homer Glen) asked if the project would go back to the same stage if the alternatives along Cedar Road were considered. Mr. Gould explained that the alternatives along Cedar Road were not included in the six alternatives to be carried forward due to their associated impacts and would require the project to step back farther to reconsider these alternatives.

Ms. Dorothy (City of Joliet) requested a timeline exhibit that shows all of the necessary steps the project is required to follow, where the project currently falls on the timeline, and where all feasible alternatives were analyzed or eliminated. Additionally, the exhibit would depict the associated costs of the project going back to various stages and include required schedules of approvals needed from the various Boards.

Mr. Fremarek (Plainfield Township) noted the TCC needs to formally assess the opposition to the preferred alternative to determine if the project should reevaluate alternative alignments. If the committee decides to explore alternatives, it needs to be decided how far back along the project timeline to go and who will be responsible for the financial consequences of that decision. Mr. Gould mentioned that the project corridor is

12 miles long and opposition is likely to occur no matter what preferred alternative is selected for the project. He also noted the County Board would need to rescind a letter of resolution if the Middle Alignment is no longer the preferred improvement. Ms. Kokodynsky noted changes in the elected officials and community governments have lead to confusion for current TCC members about the selection of the preferred alternative, particularly from an economic development standpoint. Mayor Streit noted a potential cost savings of not constructing a new roadway east of I-355, including the cost of the engineering study. Several members voiced support of exploring other alternatives as the preferred improvement. Mayor Yukich (Homer Glen) stated that the Village is opposed to the Cedar Road alignment. Mayor Streit stated that the Gougar alignment is not desirable to the City of Lockport.

The project team will provide a timeline exhibit of the necessary project steps and post this exhibit on the project website. Any additional questions from TCC members can be sent to the contact email posted on the project website. A meeting will be arranged with IDOT, FHWA, the Tollway, and TCC Members to discuss permitted actions for alignment alternatives.

The TCC meeting was adjourned at 10:30 A.M.

C-F-B TCL MEETING
11/4/15 @ 9:00 A.M.

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