



Will County Division of Transportation

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JEFF L. RONALDSON, PE
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION/
COUNTY ENGINEER

August 17, 2020

To: Mayor Raymond Soliman – City of Crest Hill
Mayor Bob O'Dekirk – City of Joliet
Mayor George Yukich – Village of Homer Glen
Mayor Tim Baldermann – Village of New Lenox
Mayor Steven Streit – City of Lockport
Supervisor Pam Meyers – Homer Township
Supervisor Ronald Alberico – Lockport Township
Supervisor Tony Fremarek – Plainfield Township
County Executive Denise Winfrey
Pastor Richard House

Re: **Caton Farm – Bruce Road Phase I Study
Project Update – New Preferred Alternative**

Dear TCC Members:

This letter is a follow-up to the January 31, 2020 letter distributed to the Committee. Since a formal meeting has not occurred since that time, this letter provides a project update outlining what has transpired over the past eight months.

The County has been proceeding with geometric design, updated operational and environmental analyses, and preparation of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the new Gougar Road alignment. A Wetland Assessment report was completed in February 2020 prior to submittal of an Environmental Survey Request (ESR) Addendum to IDOT in April 2020 to reexamine the preferred alternative and the north-south alternatives. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has requested additional information to supplement the ESR Addendum that will be submitted this month. Year 2050 traffic volumes have been obtained from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and traffic analyses at each of the signalized intersections in the study corridor are ongoing. Revisions to the previously prepared Draft Environmental Assessment are underway to reflect not only changes to the Preferred Alternative, but also new Federal requirements.

Additionally, IDOT has requested a renewed look at potential impacts to historic properties in the project corridor. This is an extensive process that is necessary to meet the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and includes development of an Area of Potential Effects (APE), a Historic Property Inventory (HPI) of structures greater than 40 years in age, and an Assessment of Effects (AOE) report. We are still assessing the impact these analyses will have on the overall project schedule but other studies continue as anticipated. Based on the steps required, it is still anticipated the completion of Phase I Engineering will take 2-3 years for completion, including design development and review, and all required public meetings, and review/approval of related environmental studies and reports.

Next Steps

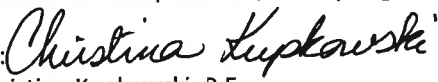
- Submit additional information to IDOT in August 2020 to accompany the ESR Addendum.
- Initiate Section 106 process and begin developing the Area of Potential Effects.

- Begin discussions with TCC members about jurisdiction of all roadways in the corridor.
- Present the project at the September NEPA/404 Merger Meeting to provide preliminary results of the three north-south alignments and recommend a Preferred Alternative. It is anticipated that concurrence on the Preferred Alternative will occur in February 2021.

Timeline Since Last TCC Meeting

- April 29, 2019 – TCC Meeting – TCC votes to change the Preferred Alternative to Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce – Gougar.
- September 19, 2019 – Project Study Team attended NEPA/404 Merger Meeting to update IDOT, FHWA and other Federal agencies on the project.
- October 2019 - Current
 - Completed field work for updated wetland delineations, preparing Addendum ESR, detailed design development along Gougar Road.
 - Completed Wetlands Assessment report.
 - Submitted Addendum Environment Survey Request.
 - Continuing Gougar Road design
 - Development of horizontal roadway and shared-use path/sidewalk design, roadway profile, and cross sections
 - Assessment of existing and proposed right-of-way
 - Surveying of streams
 - Development of drainage studies
 - Development of traffic studies for the project corridor.
 - Coordinating environmental and historic documentation for the project corridor.
- September 2020 – Attend NEPA/404 Merger Meeting to present preliminary results of the reevaluation.
- February 2021 – Attend NEPA/404 Merger Meeting to obtain formal agency approval on the New Preferred Alternative.

Sincerely,
 Jeff L. Ronaldson, P.E.
 Director of Transportation/County Engineer

By: 
 Christina Kupkowski, P.E.
 Phase 1 Project Manager

CC: Rev. Griffin (Shiloh MB Church Executive Assistant)
 Lisa Dorothy, City of Joliet
 Nick Palmer, Will County (Chief of Staff, County Executive)
 Moira Dunn, Will County (Chief of Staff, County Board)
 Mary Tatroe, Will County (State's Attorney)
 Edna Brass, Will County Board
 Herbert Brooks, Jr, Will County Board
 Annette Parker, Will County Board
 Rachel Ventura, Will County Board