

Meeting Summary

SUBJECT: Caton Farm – Bruce Road Phase I Study
Fairmont SIG Meeting #1

LOCATION: Fairmont Community Center

DATE/TIME: October 12, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Jeff Ronaldson, WCDOT
Joel Christell, Civiltech
Maddie Johnson, Civiltech
Julia Nigohosian, CBBEL
Matt Huffman, CBBEL
Delinda Herod, SIG Member, President of the Fairmont Community Partnership
Adriana Lujan, SIG Member (on behalf of Fairmont School District 89)
Rachael Ventura, Will County Board

This was the first Stakeholder Involvement Group (SIG) Meeting for the Fairmont Community. The SIG list is comprised of 3 stakeholders from the Fairmont Community. Invites were sent out via USPS on October 1, 2021. Two SIG members attended the meeting. Additionally, the County Board Representative, Rachel Ventura (District 9), attended the meeting.

A formal presentation was made to describe the stakeholder involvement process and discuss the project background, status of the project, Fairmont Community questionnaire, and next steps. The following summarizes the key discussion points and concerns of the meeting attendees:

- Attendees identified potential concerns and benefits as a result of the project being constructed in the Fairmont Community during a group activity:
 - Benefits
 - Community Identifiers
 - Drainage improvements
 - Lighting Improvements
 - Bike/pedestrian accommodations
 - There is currently only one sidewalk within the Fairmont Community which was recently constructed along the east side of Green Garden using Safe Routes to School funding
 - Opportunity for aesthetics or gateways to be incorporated
 - Concerns
 - Noise
 - Safety of children crossing the street
 - Increase in traffic
 - Pollution from more vehicles

- Visual impacts
 - Negative affect to property values
 - Stress placed on children dealing with a busy roadway within their community
- Safety of the community is one of the greatest concerns pertaining the project, specifically because of its location and close proximity to Fairmont School.
- Attendees confirmed the community is an aging one, with the majority of its members having lived in Fairmont since its beginning. Attendees were concerned about how the aging community members would relocate and with what money, due to the lower property values in the area.
- Attendees felt the community is improving and changing for the better. They wanted to point out that people are choosing to move into the area and make investments to their homes because of its culture and strong community bonds.
- There was concern for loss of important community establishments and businesses due to the project.
- The attendees were concerned about loss of sense of community and identity with the proposed improvement being in the middle of the community.
- Attendees provided feedback on the community newsletter and questionnaire that was distributed in early September:
 - The newsletter and questionnaire created some confusion about the impacts of the project within the Fairmont Community, as well as where displacements are occurring.
 - Attendees stated that providing a newsletter and questionnaire in Spanish was beneficial since more Spanish speaking residents have been moving into the community.
 - There was some misunderstanding about which properties would be affected by the project. Attendees relayed that the community believes the properties being acquired for the project extended much further than the actual project boundary. From the map that was included in the newsletter and questionnaire, members of the Fairmont Community thought the impacted zone was the entire Fairmont Community.
 - Attendees felt that the project team should engage more 1-on-1 with key community members and that the brochure is not the most effective way of communication.
 - Attendees believed the survey was too complicated and lengthy; however, they will put forth efforts to have more community members complete the survey.
 - The attendees felt dropping the brochures off door-to-door might be more effective than mailing.
 - Attendees stated the Fairmont school is one of the best places to try to communicate with Fairmont residents; consider advertising project information within an e-blast/newsletter.
- Additional questions and comments regarding future meetings and the project:
 - Cold weather is a concern for future in-person SIG/Public Meetings.

- The attendees requested more detailed maps showing the displacements along with renderings.
- Attendees requested other project examples, renderings, or similar roadways to better visualize what this project may look like.
- The attendees expressed that the community feels targeted by this project and do not want to be forced to live between a heavier traveled roadway and the train tracks.
- There was not initially a clear understanding of the alternative development process and additional questions were answered regarding how the preferred alignment was selected.
- The community members view this project as a “highway” dividing their community and becoming a physical barrier.
- Attendees recommended inviting other key businesses and church leaders to be a part of the SIG (Conways Barbershop, Norma’s Cafe, Community Center, Corner Store, etc.)
- Ms. Ventura asked for clarification on why IL Route 171 cannot be utilized as the north/south route to travel between the new river crossing and Bruce Road or IL Route 7.
- Ms. Herod requested a link to website showing the proposed improvement.

Following the formal presentation and discussion, exhibits were provided for viewing and the project team was available to answer more question.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:30 p.m.