

## Eastern Bypass Study Community Advisory Group

### **Eastern Bypass Study**

From Interstate 74 to Illinois Route 6  
Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford Counties  
Job No. P-94-021-07; Catalog No. 033514-00P

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

#### **Community Advisory Group Meeting #11 December 6, 2012**

The eleventh meeting of the Eastern Bypass Study Community Advisory Group (CAG) was held at the Countryside Banquet Facility, in Washington, on Thursday, December 6, 2012, at 6:00 p.m.

Representing IDOT's Study Team for the Eastern Bypass Project were the following individuals:

- Mike Lewis (IDOT)
- Tom Lacy (IDOT)
- Greg Larson (IDOT)
- Brittany McGinn (IDOT)
- Jeff Schlotter (H.W. Lochner, Inc.)
- George Ghareeb (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- Scott Presslak (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- Julie Schmidt (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- Dennis Jennings (Technology of Participation)
- Judy Weddle (Technology of Participation)

Presented below is a summary of the meeting, organized by the agenda items.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 1 -- WELCOME AND MEETING OBJECTIVES**

The meeting began shortly after 6:00 p.m. with Jeff Schlotter welcoming the CAG and introducing four new members: Sally Hanley, representing the Economic Development Council for Central Illinois; Mike Hinrichsen, representing the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and Woodford County; Walt Laylock, representing the Village of Metamora; and Gary Rosenbohm, representing the Peoria County Farm Bureau.

Mr. Schlotter then acknowledged that several members of the public were in attendance to observe the meeting. [The meeting was preceded earlier in the week by articles/segments in the local media, and approximately 100 members of the public were in attendance at the CAG meeting.] Mr. Schlotter welcomed them and reminded them of the ground rules, asking them to please understand that while members of the public are always welcome at CAG meetings, the meeting

ground rules require that members of the public wait until after the close of the meeting to ask questions of the CAG or the Study Team or commenting on the evening's meeting. Mr. Schlotter also encouraged the members of the audience to fill out comment forms and submit them to the Study Team.

Mr. Schlotter then stated that because the study is entering a new phase and because the CAG has four new members, the Study Team felt it was important to take a moment and reflect on the accomplishments the CAG has achieved during the Corridor Study. He then enumerated them, as follows:

- CAG Meeting 1 – CAG formation and information about study process and NEPA
- CAG Meeting 2 – Identify valued community elements; possible project effects
- CAG Meeting 3 – Development of context audit
- CAG Meeting 4 – Problem statement development
- CAG Meeting 5 – Completion of purpose and need; initial corridor mapping
- CAG Meeting 6 – Corridor refinement; purpose and need refinement
- CAG Meeting 7 – Began initial drop-keep process
- CAG Meeting 8 – Continued drop-keep process
- CAG Meeting 9 – Completion of initial drop-keep process – 14 corridors down to 6
- CAG Meeting 10 – Conducted second round of drop-keep – 6 corridors down to 4

Mr. Schlotter noted that this represents a tremendous amount of work and constitutes the majority of the work required for the Corridor Study. He stated that the Study Team applauds the CAG members for their dedication and patience as these important steps have been worked through and completed.

Mr. Schlotter then outlined the evening's agenda, stating that the meeting would focus on four primary objectives: an update on Study activities since last spring's CAG meeting; an explanation about how the Study will be moving forward using a "Tiered EIS" process; an invitation for any CAG member to discuss their views on the importance of the categories on the benefits-impacts matrix; and, a discussion on IDOT's suggestion that Corridor D-13 be dropped from further consideration.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2 -- UPDATE ON STUDY ACTIVITIES**

### **Discussions That Took Place Over The Summer**

Mr. Schlotter began by saying that at the previous CAG meeting, the Study Team mentioned IDOT was coordinating with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Because FHWA would provide much of the funding, the study needs to transition into FHWA oversight, becoming a federal project, meaning it must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Mr. Schlotter then reminded the CAG members that most all DOT projects follow a process with five basic steps: 1) long range planning or visioning; 2) studies and preliminary plan preparation; 3) final design plans; 4) right-of-way acquisition; and, 5) construction and maintenance. He further explained that the Eastern Bypass is currently in the Studies and Plans stage, and that it has been divided into a Corridor Study stage and an Alignments Study stage. The Corridor Study is being done "pre-NEPA," not under official FHWA review.

The original process called for a preferred corridor to be identified, and then the NEPA process would begin for more detailed roadway alignments, within that corridor. This past summer, discussions between IDOT and FHWA officials focused on FHWA's preferences for transitioning from the pre-NEPA corridor phase to the NEPA-level alignments phase. During those discussions, a relatively new way of going forward using a tiered process was brought up and was reviewed internally and with FHWA. As a result, the decision was made to move forward on the Eastern Bypass project following the tiered process – a change from the process originally envisioned.

Mr. Schlotter then took a few moments to refresh everyone's memory about NEPA before explaining what the Tiered EIS process entails.

### **NEPA Fundamentals**

NEPA has been in place for 43 years. The primary objective in all NEPA analyses is informed decision-making about the project's benefits and impacts – so that the best decisions can be made about it. NEPA requires that the effects of federal projects (and plans and programs) be assessed to identify any significant impacts to natural, built, or human environments. The law also requires public involvement take place and that there be meaningful ways for the public to receive information and make comments about the proposed project.

Federal projects must also comply with other laws and regulations, other than NEPA, such as the Water Quality Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Department of Transportation Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Farmland Protection Policy Act. Part of the NEPA process includes ensuring the project will comply with the relevant provisions of these laws and regulations, meaning significant agency involvement is required, too. The results are contained in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or other similar documents.

The basic EIS process begins with a statement of the project's purpose and underlying needs, followed by development of alternative ways of meeting the project purpose. Then the natural, built, and social environments that could be affected by those alternatives are studied and documented, followed by an assessment of each alternative's potential impacts. This information is contained in an official Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Draft EIS is then reviewed by regulatory agencies and the general public. A formal public hearing is held to allow the public to further review the document and comment on it. Once all comments are responded to and documented, the Final EIS is prepared. It is important to note that NEPA does not dictate the outcome or decision. It dictates a process.

### **Tiered EIS Process**

Mr. Schlotter then explained that over the years, and only recently in Illinois, a process has been developed for carrying out NEPA on projects that are exceptionally large or complex called a "Tiered EIS" process. This is a process in which a project is divided into two stages or "tiers." The first stage – Tier 1 – addresses bigger issues for the overall project, including the purpose of project, potential project benefits, the basic project location, and a generalized assessment of impacts. This is a complete EIS process, which by definition results in an official decision on these items. The second stage – Tier 2 – addresses all the specific issues covered in a "normal," non-tiered EIS process,

including impact analyses conducted at the “conceptual design” level. This is also a complete NEPA process, with an official decision on the location and design concept.

### **Decision to Use a Tiered EIS for the Eastern Bypass Project**

Mr. Schlotter then explained that during the discussions with the FHWA over the summer, it was agreed to move forward on the Eastern Bypass Study using a Tiered EIS process. This decision was reached because the nature of the Eastern Bypass Study is such that tiering the EIS would have several advantages: it would be less expensive than conducting the full NEPA EIS now, but would still provide more certain decisions than a pre-NEPA corridor study (thus avoiding a significant gap in the decision-making process of the Study); it would allow formal agency reviews of corridor-level decisions; and, it would result in an official “record of decision” on a preferred corridor, meaning there would be less uncertainty sooner in the study process. Mr. Schlotter then turned to the topic of the main elements specific to the Tier 1 Study for the Eastern Bypass.

### **Main Elements in the Bypass Project’s Tier 1 Phase**

Tier 1 will require some additional work with regulatory agencies to: inform them of analyses that have been carried out to date; get their official input; reach a conclusion regarding a preferred alternative; and, develop a detailed document for federal approval. The foundation for all of this has already been laid, given the work IDOT and the CAG have already done during the Corridor Study.

The initial work to be done for the Tier 1 EIS includes refinement of the project’s official Purpose and Need Statement and review of the corridor selection process, beginning with the initial set of 14 corridors. Once those tasks are accomplished, during the first half of 2013, there will be a series of closely-scheduled events to select a final corridor for the Tier 1 Study. Those events include scheduling a CAG meeting to review the corridors and to help select one preferred corridor; reviewing this selection with FHWA and the other NEPA regulatory agencies; preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement; conducting a public hearing on the Draft EIS; finalizing the EIS; and, receiving final FHWA approval of the corridor selection.

Regarding Stakeholder Involvement for the Tier 1 process, if during the Tier 1 process there are no changes, or only minor changes, to the conclusions reached during the current Corridor Study, then the stakeholder involvement elements will consist of notifying and informing the CAG and the general public of the project status; maintaining the project website; and meeting with local groups as needed. If extensive changes to the study process are needed, then the above elements would apply, with additional CAG meetings and possibly an extra public meeting held, as necessary.

### **Fall Scoping Meeting**

Mr. Schlotter then explained that the NEPA process requires a scoping meeting be held with FHWA and jurisdictional agencies early in the study process. The purpose is to identify the important topics to be studied and appropriate methods of analysis. Mr. Schlotter noted that this meeting was held, as the first step in the Tier 1 study process, on November 1. He noted that the IDOT Study Team is still awaiting final approval of the meeting’s conclusions, but that based on the content of the meeting, it appears the Corridor Study’s methods and stakeholder involvement process will be accepted by the regulatory agencies.

At this point, Mr. Schlotter asked if there were any questions about the study update information.

### **Questions and Comments**

Mike Godar (Economic) asked what agencies were included in the “NEPA group.” Mr. Schlotter said that the National Environmental Policy Act, and other federal laws, such as those pertaining to clean water, clean air, historic properties, and other sensitive environmental issues, each are upheld by various federal or state agencies – such as the Federal Highway Administration or the Illinois Department of Natural Resources – and it is these agencies that are included in the NEPA group. He also noted he would be mentioning many of these agencies in the next agenda item.

Keith Bachman (Community Impacts) asked if there would be only one corridor at the end of the Tiered EIS process and if Tier 1 was part of the Corridor Study or the Alignments Study. Mr. Schlotter explained that Tier 1 would end when a corridor is chosen, with Tier 2 continuing as the alignments phase of the project. There would be an EIS for Tier 1 and an additional EIS for Tier 2.

Rudy Habben (Heart of Illinois Sierra Club) asked for confirmation then that Tier 2 is the alignment study. Mr. Schlotter acknowledged that it is and noted that Tier 2 will include preliminary design plans and right-of-way for the Eastern Bypass.

Mike Hinrichsen (Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and Woodford County Board) asked if the tiered process would shorten the overall timeframe for the project. Mr. Schlotter said that it may seem like the tiered process is adding a step by including two EIS documents, but the Study Team feels that may result in a faster overall process by allowing the formal corridor-level decisions to be made in the next year, then taking advantage of data already collected and analyzed for use in the alignment-level EIS. Mike Lewis (IDOT) added that some of the answers determined in Tier 1 could be used in Tier 2, thus helping to shorten the timeline.

There being no further questions, Mr. Schlotter moved on to the next agenda item.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3 -- GROUP DISCUSSION ON CORRIDOR CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Introduction to Group Discussion**

Mr. Schlotter explained that the IDOT Study Team wants to hear from the CAG about the importance of the Study’s matrix categories, stating that the FHWA and other NEPA agencies will be reviewing the conclusions that have been reached during the Corridor Study. He said that the Study Team wants to be able to report to these agencies not only the benefit and impact categories that have been used in the Corridor Study, but also how the CAG members feel about the significance of the categories. Mr. Schlotter then presented some introductory information for the CAG to consider.

#### **Impact Category Considerations**

Mr. Schlotter reminded the CAG members that some impact categories on the screening matrix have always appeared in red text, indicating that these categories represent resources protected by laws outside of NEPA. He then listed those laws, as follows:

Wetlands and 100-year floodplains are protected under the Water Quality Act of 1987, which is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Agricultural areas must be addressed under the Farmland Protection Policy Act, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Conservation, park, and historic lands are protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and also under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and are administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, and the State Historic Preservation Officers, respectively.

Mr. Schlotter explained that there are other requirements as well, noting that NEPA itself requires a “hard look” at significant impacts to the natural, physical and human environments, and that NEPA is administered by the Federal Highway Administration. Mr. Schlotter also noted that FHWA has a policy promoting Context-Sensitive Solutions (CSS), as does IDOT, and that IDOT has officially designated the Eastern Bypass Study as a CSS project. In addition to basic project requirements, CSS requires seeking to preserve or enhance the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of the area. In general, the Federal Highway Administration and IDOT are responsible for ensuring that all NEPA requirements are met—even those that are not associated with other laws and regulations.

Mr. Schlotter concluded by stating that two additional impact categories will be examined in Tier 1 process. The first is impacts to threatened and endangered plant and animal species. This is required under the Endangered Species Act of 1971 and is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The other is an examination of possible disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations, which is required in keeping with Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice).

In general, Mr. Schlotter stated, the agencies mentioned are represented on the group that will review the Tier 1 process, led by the Federal Highway Administration.

#### **CAG Member Statements and Discussion**

Mr. Schlotter then reaffirmed that the Study Team is inviting each CAG member to share their feelings about the categories on the matrix. He explained that it is fairly easy to develop impact numbers for these categories, whether measured in acres, or miles, or occurrences, etc., but the numbers alone only show quantitative impacts, and to determine the significance of those impacts is a matter of human judgment, and is often based on compromise, overall assessment of pros, cons, benefits, impacts, and other qualitative factors.

Mr. Schlotter also stated that before the Study Team goes any further in the study, and particularly as an initial step in the Tier 1 process, the Team would like the CAG members to share their thoughts and feelings, fears and hopes, with respect to this project and the matrix categories—in terms of both benefits and impacts. Specifically, what are the things that IDOT, the FHWA, and the regulatory agencies should consider most important as the study enters the Tier 1 process? What is

most important to you, the group you represent, and your friends and neighbors? And, why are these things important to you?

He then asked that the CAG members abide by a few general guidelines, including respecting the time of the group in thinking about the length or detail of your statements; respecting the guidance provided by the Study Team's facilitators; respecting fellow CAG members' opinions and concerns; and, being as honest as possible in sharing views and the reasons behind those views.

Mr. Schlotter then turned the floor over to the Study Team's facilitators (Dennis Jennings and Judy Weddle) to guide the group discussion and record key comments on flip charts. (see Attachment 1 for a verbatim transcription of the evening's flip chart notes.)

Pete Fenner (Peoria Audubon Society) asked if the representative bands used to determine the impacts shown in the matrix represent possible alignments. Mr. Schlotter responded by saying that since the corridors are very wide and vary in width, it is not useful to directly compare impacts between them. Instead, the team developed "representative bands," which are 500 feet wide and include basic engineering such as feasible curves and basic interchange footprints. These were laid out by the Study Team in an attempt to keep impact to a minimum, but without going into the level of detail that would be developed with fully engineered alignments. The impacts for each corridor were then determined using these representative bands, meaning that the numbers themselves are representative. It's possible that a representative band will end up as an alignment, but various reasonable alignments within the selected corridor will be analyzed and considered.

Shelli McClellan (Property Impacts) asked why the projected traffic volumes on the Illinois River bridge change between the corridors if the representative band is the same for all four corridors in the crossing location. Mr. Schlotter responded by saying that the volumes are based on a traffic model, which shows different corridors attracting different levels of traffic further south and east in the study area. This, in turn, affects how much traffic would use the new river crossing.

Randall Jacobs (Property Impacts) said that he and his neighbors are concerned about a new roadway through the McClugage Road corridor, particularly in regards to noise and potential water pollution in the Westlake subdivision near the McClugage Road Wal-Mart in Washington. Mr. Jacobs stressed the need to maintain clean water and low pollution in the area.

Greg Sinn (Tazewell County Board) noted that the Bypass is a regional highway and will encourage economic development county-wide with better access. Mr. Sinn said that the Bypass should not be located in an area so far to the east that no one will use it.

Bill Royer (Property Impacts) said the Study Team needs to consider how the road will affect industry, commerce, and residential and agricultural areas, noting that "everyone wants to minimize negative impacts to homeowners, farms, and industry," but the Study Team should remember that the objective is to build a "ring road" around the metropolitan area, similar to Interstate 465 surrounding Indianapolis. He further stated that a ring road would be good planning and would create a circulator route to move people and alleviate traffic congestion in the area. Mr. Royer

reminded the Study Team that they can't only look at the conditions in the study area as they are today, but need to forecast future conditions to make the transportation network more efficient.

John Anderson (Commuting / Road Network) noted that he represents Commuting and Road Network interests and is also the County Engineer for Tazewell County but does not represent the County on the CAG. Mr. Anderson said that he and fellow CAG member Kevin Arvin were elected several years back, and since then, Tazewell County has many local roads with more traffic than they were designed to handle, including Nofsinger Road, School Street, and Washington Blacktop. Mr. Anderson recommended focusing on improved transportation leading to a new bridge across the Illinois River, which most people seem to agree is needed. He further noted that with a new bridge, traffic will need improved facilities to access the bridge, and one of the purposes of the Bypass Study should be to determine those needs. He stated the Bypass will reduce impacts on other roadways by taking traffic off roads that are not suited for higher volumes. He further noted that three county commissioners are directly affected by excess traffic on some of Tazewell County's back roads and noted that the County lacks good north-south access to Interstate 74. Mr. Schlotter observed that Mr. Anderson chose to focus on the benefits side of the matrix and asked if there were any impacts that were important to him. Mr. Anderson responded that safety should be a high priority.

Richard Cridlebaugh (East Peoria Planning Commission) said he was interested in how the project would be funded for construction, noting that the Interstate Highway System was built with approximately 90 percent federal funding and 10 percent state funding.

Shelli McClellan said that Corridor T-6 would likely affect her house and that she and her neighbors would oppose this corridor being selected as the preferred. Ms. McClellan also said that the Community Cohesion/Division category on the study's impact matrix shows no disruptions for Corridors P-2 and T-6, but in both cases the corridor would cut off residential areas and have significant impacts to community cohesion between Washington and Sunnyland. Ms. McClellan said the new Illinois River crossing is needed, but the rest of the Bypass project is not. Ms. McClellan pointed to the recent Illinois Route 8 project, which she considers a good project that safely improves traffic flow through the area, and similar upgrades elsewhere in the study area as negating the need for an Eastern Bypass. She added that residents in the P-2 and T-6 corridors are very concerned and suggested the CAG not recommend removing Corridor D-13 from consideration.

Ken Maurer (Community Impacts) said he is also concerned about community cohesion. Mr. Maurer noted that the corridors generally would include seven or eight interchanges. He stated that many travelers are currently using good roads between Metamora and Germantown Hills and asked how many of those roads would be cut off due to the Bypass and how engineers determine which roads get bridged over the Bypass. Mr. Maurer also noted the need to move buses and large farm equipment across the Bypass via new overpasses. Mr. Schlotter asked Mr. Maurer if the concern is community cohesion or more a concern of a closely related "barrier effect" from the new highway. Mr. Maurer responded that it is more of a barrier effect because of the concern for the movement of vehicles.



Bill Dietrich (Agriculture) spoke about the Village of Morton and how it's unusual to find a city of its size (17,000 residents) without a primary north-south and east-west roadway network. Mr. Dietrich said he feels a road paralleling Dee-Mack Road would not be a good choice considering the low traffic volumes on Dee-Mack and how easy it is to pass other vehicles on its straight, flat alignment. Mr. Dietrich said the most important need for the Bypass Study is to determine what will help the most people get from Point A to Point B with the least amount of mileage and the best improvement in safety.

Norman Durflinger (Village of Morton) added that the Village of Morton is looking at the economic development aspects of the Eastern Bypass, noting that a new interchange with Interstate 74 at either Tennessee Avenue or Main Street would stimulate growth along the interstate. Dr. Durflinger added that a connection to U.S. 150 would be very helpful, and that traveler safety is important for the Village. He noted that Morton is served by two interstates (I-74 and I-155) and that those interstates are an asset to the Village, with development situated near their interchanges.

Keith Bachman (Community Impacts) said that the Study Team needs to keep in mind the big picture of the "Ring Road," noting that everything "inside the ring" will eventually become developed, with some additional development outside the ring as well. Mr. Bachman said that agricultural land in these areas would likely be taken out of production because of higher land values. Mr. Bachman said the impact inside the ring will result in land that will be predominantly residential or industrial, like Peoria, and asked if that is what residents on the east side of the Illinois River really want. Mr. Schlotter noted that Mr. Bachman's concerns deal with what the Tiered EIS process considers "secondary" or "indirect" effects and that NEPA requires analysis of these kinds of impacts. Mr. Schlotter noted that traffic models consider future development in their traffic predictions. Mr. Bachman said that the Eastern Bypass is being driven by economic development concerns, not traffic, and that if traffic was the primary driving force of the project, new interchanges to Interstate 74 and local road upgrades are all that would be necessary. Mr. Bachman noted that the further east the corridors are located, the lower traffic volumes they carry, and that two of the corridors previously eliminated (Corridors P-4 and T-7) were shown as carrying more traffic than the corridors remaining for further study. Mr. Bachman added that economic development is not necessarily a benefit to the local community. Mr. Bachman also noted that agriculture should also be regarded as economic development, even if it produces fewer tax dollars per acre than other commercial and industrial uses.

Paul Kinsinger (Cycling-Rec-Atl Modes) commented that Corridors P-2 and T-6 should be considered in terms of tourism promotion. Dr. Kinsinger said that ensuring a separate facility for bicycles is included with the Eastern Bypass is important to him, and adding a new bicycle link that can potentially connect to the Rock Island Trail on the west would encourage additional tourism to the Peoria metropolitan area. He said that recreational trails are consistently ranked high in terms of quality of life issues and that Illinois is losing residents and economic development to other nearby lower-tax states such as Tennessee. Dr. Kinsinger said he is concerned that a corridor east of Washington would not include a recreational trail, or that it would be used by fewer people.

Steve Jaeger (Heart of Illinois Regional Port District) said that freight transportation is an important consideration. Mr. Jaeger said the Port District is in full support of completing the loop around the

Peoria area, and that it would improve trucking connections between Morton and the Pioneer Parkway area of Peoria, citing Interstate 74's southerly alignment. Mr. Jaeger said that most of the existing trucking infrastructure in the region is centered around Caterpillar's logistics center in Morton as well as in Mossville and the Pioneer Parkway corridor. Mr. Jaeger said that Corridor M-10 would best accommodate trucking movements and would divert truck traffic from the McCluggage Bridge and U.S. 24.

Jolene Neuhauser (Woodford County Farm Bureau) said she wanted to thank Mr. Bachman for his comments regarding the importance of agriculture to the local economy and added it is important to the state as well, since it is the largest industry in Illinois. Ms. Neuhauser said the farm bureau is not always against roads, stressing that the local roadway network is needed for farmers to get their harvests to market. She added, however, that maintaining and improving the existing lock and dam infrastructure along the Illinois River should be a higher priority than the Eastern Bypass so that central Illinois crops can be transported more efficiently.

Caroline Schertz (Environment) noted that she was formerly on the Woodford County Board and is currently an independent business owner. Ms. Schertz said that Tazewell and Woodford Counties have some of the best farmland and soil conditions in the world for farming, and it is difficult to justify giving up more agricultural land than would absolutely be needed for a new roadway. Ms. Schertz noted the growing population of Woodford County, and how her first home was relocated and demolished for the widening of Illinois Route 116 through Germantown Hills, which took a total of 25 years to complete. Now, she said, Illinois Route 116 is a major arterial for Woodford County and it has spurred residential and industrial growth. Ms. Schertz said she would like to see more proactive land use planning in the area to help control the growth, and she would like to see a balance between residential and agricultural takings, if the Eastern Bypass is approved.

Walt Laylock (Village of Metamora) noted the other CAG members' good comments regarding the benefits of growth in the residential and commercial sectors with respect to the cost of agricultural land. Mr. Laylock noted that ancillary infrastructure costs associated with the Eastern Bypass (the need for local municipalities to extend utilities, wastewater sewers, etc. to these developing areas) should be considered, and that the local communities would likely not be receiving much assistance to pay for these improvements. Mr. Laylock added that there is a need for a new northern crossing of the Illinois River and a new access point to Interstate 74 that would allow a bypass of Eureka, rather than accessing Interstate 74 via Illinois Route 117.

Mike Hinrichsen (Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and Woodford County Board) said that the key points regarding the Eastern Bypass are economic development and creating a growth corridor from Mossville to Morton, saying it's a "critical area" and important for stimulating the local tax base. Mr. Hinrichsen said that in much of the study area today—especially in Woodford County—the tax burden for local schools falls largely on homeowners and that the Eastern Bypass represents a great opportunity to grow the tax base. Mr. Hinrichsen also said highway safety is an issue, noting that most highway deaths are on rural/local roads rather than freeways. Mr. Hinrichsen said the need for a new bridge over the Illinois River is common ground for his constituents and other CAG members.

Mike Godar (Economic) said that he has been involved in what is now the Eastern Bypass Study for 16 years. He noted that during an earlier study for the “ring road” project he collected 13,300 anti-project signatures and, with a group of 400-500 people, effectively stopped that earlier study, in the 1990s. Mr. Godar noted that the old corridor was very similar to Corridor T-6, and if the Eastern Bypass was truly the economic development stimulus that the region needed, his earlier opposition would have been dismissed quickly, rather than allowed to stop the project. Mr. Godar said he feels this project is more of a “want” than a “need,” noting that other alternatives for meeting some of the communities’ objectives have not been considered. Mr. Godar said he knows the region well, and noted that Mr. Anderson’s comments about the safety issues of the local road network were very important to consider. Mr. Godar said he was concerned about certain “camps” seeing benefits for one community at the expense of another, and said there needs to be a consensus on viewing the project from a three-county regional perspective. Mr. Godar said that no corridor west of Corridor D-13 could be considered a “regional” highway because too many portions of the region would not be served by it. Mr. Godar told the CAG to keep an appropriate time horizon in mind and recommended looking 40 to 50 years out with respect to planning for the Bypass. He noted Washington’s high growth rate between the 2000 and 2010 censuses and asked the CAG if they “want the east side of the Illinois River to be the next Peoria.” Mr. Godar went on to say that Interstate 474 has caused crime rates to increase outside of Peoria, citing recent bank robberies in the Grand Prairie area. Mr. Godar also noted the cost estimates of the project seemed disproportionately high, relative to the population of the region.

Pete Fenner (Peoria Audubon Society) said that two unique environmental features of the Peoria region are the Illinois River and the river bluff areas. Mr. Fenner said the Illinois River is already polluted and degraded, but the forested bluffs—such as in Forest Park, Singing Woods, and the Spring Creek Preserve—need to be maintained. Mr. Fenner noted that Tom Lerczak, from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, was at the last CAG meeting to discuss the importance of the Spring Creek Preserve area. Mr. Fenner added that the forested river bluffs are easily the most important and unique environmental asset of the Peoria region and should be preserved.

There being no further CAG member comments, Mr. Schlotter thanked the members for their input and moved on to the next agenda item.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4 -- IDOT’S SUGGESTION TO DROP ONE MORE CORRIDOR**

##### **Reminder About Previous Selection Results**

Mr. Schlotter began by reminding the CAG members about the initial decisions made at previous CAG meetings regarding corridors to dismiss from further consideration.

Specifically, he reminded that group that of the two locations for crossing the Illinois River, the northern crossing was seen as having more problems, relative to the southern crossing and that, as a result, consensus was reached to drop all corridors that included the northern crossing. These were: P-1, T-5, M-8, M-9, D-11, and D-12. Mr. Schlotter noted that for this first round of the “drop-keep” exercise, the eight CAG “table groups” were nearly unanimous, with only one “Keep” card posted on the “sticky wall.”

Mr. Schlotter then explained that corridors P-3 and D-14 were the next to be eliminated, due to circuitous travel and other factors, and noted that there was also only one “keep” card, in total, for these two corridors.

The next two corridors to be dropped were P-4 and T-7, due to concerns about potentially significant impacts in the vicinity of the Spring Creek Preserve parcel. Mr. Schlotter noted that while P-4 had a majority of “drop” cards, T-7 had a majority of “keep” cards, which is an indication that the selections were becoming more difficult to make. With these two corridors dropped, four remained for further consideration: P-2, T-6, M-10, and D-13.

### **Suggestion to Drop D-13**

Mr. Schlotter noted that at the last CAG meeting it seemed the group wanted to discuss and possibly drop D-13, but that there was no time left during the meeting to do so. He also reminded the group that the “sticky wall” exercise resulted in only three “keep” cards for D-13. He then stated that the IDOT Study Team would like to follow up with a discussion about possibly dropping D-13. He noted that dropping a corridor tonight was not required, but if the CAG was ready to do so, it could help to simplify the Tier 1 process as the Study goes under NEPA review.

Mr. Schlotter explained that M-10 and D-13 are the two remaining corridors that are located east of Washington, and that the IDOT Study Team feels that at least one of these should remain for more scrutiny during the Tier 1 process. He further explained that the Study Team doesn’t feel it is necessary to keep both, however, and would like to suggest that D-13 be the one to drop. Mr. Schlotter then explained that he would like to discuss a comparison of the benefits and impacts between M-10 and D-13 and referred the CAG members to a graphic that showed a comparison of the impacts between these two corridors. He then proceeded to summarize the impacts comparison.

As Mr. Schlotter was concluding his impacts summary, Randall Jacobs (Property Impacts) stated that in his view a direct comparison between M-10 and D-13 is not valid, considering that D-13 would avoid many impacts relative to the other three corridors. He noted that Corridors P-2 and T-6 are worse than M-10 and D-13 in wetland impacts. Mr. Jacobs said that the two eastern corridors (M-10 and D-13) would be far less disruptive to the community and have lower impacts than the two western corridors (P-2 and T-6). Mr. Jacobs explained that Corridors P-2 and T-6 would further divide Sunnyland and Washington, and local access frontage roads would be required throughout the corridor to maintain property access. Mr. Jacobs said Corridor D-13 may be better than Corridor M-10, considering D-13 would have fewer diagonal crop severances, but said that both M-10 and D-13 would have low residential relocations compared to the western corridors. Mr. Jacobs said the only categories in which M-10 and D-13 had impacts higher than P-2 and T-6 were on right-of-way required and agricultural land required, but even the agricultural impacts weren’t significantly higher than Corridor T-6. Mr. Jacobs concluded his statement by saying the CAG should not be eliminating the more economical and lower impact Corridor D-13.

Scott Davis (City of Pekin) expressed concern that while the data in the matrix are accurate as of today, future demand and development is not being considered. Mr. Davis noted the differences in land uses along the Interstate 474 corridor following its development and construction. Mr. Davis

also noted that currently the most developed parts of the study area are in the western portion, near East Peoria, but that development is expanding towards the north and east.

Mr. Schlotter said that while the intent of the NEPA process is to make informed decisions based on the best possible predictions of how a project would affect the area, we can never have total certainty about future conditions. Mr. Schlotter explained that the team reviewed the land use plans and future land use designations for all of the communities in the study area, taking those plans into account as the corridors were developed. He also noted that the traffic modeling being done for the region does make estimates of future development that could be triggered by the new Eastern Bypass.

Carey French (Caterpillar Inc.) asked how the Federal Highway Administration would treat Corridors M-10 and D-13 and asked that if D-13 were to be dropped now, would the FHWA require it to be brought back into consideration if they felt it warranted additional study. Mr. Schlotter said that that was a possibility, adding that the FHWA and the NEPA agencies had given a preliminary indication that they were comfortable with considering as few as three or four corridors for more detailed review, and that the Study Team does not want to request that the CAG go through the process of selecting one preferred corridor, only to have to re-include dropped corridors for further analysis later. Mr. Schlotter also noted the Study Team felt confident D-13 could be dropped without having to revisit it in detail for the NEPA agencies. Ms. French stressed the need to look at the project in terms of future development versus agricultural development and consider the future impacts.

Jim Dunnan (Controlled Growth) noted the CAG had covered a lot of ground at this evening's meeting and was happy with how open and honest other CAG members had been in expressing their views. Dr. Dunnan said he agreed with Mr. Jacobs' point that it was a long but good process in going from fourteen corridors down to the current four, but it would be a mistake to look at the eastern corridors in a vacuum. Dr. Dunnan said that if an eastern corridor is to be eliminated, then a western corridor should also be considered for elimination. Dr. Dunnan also noted the time that had elapsed during the meeting and said that it was inappropriate to get to the most important part of the meeting this late in the agenda. He suggested that the CAG either meet more often or get to the more important topics earlier in the meeting. Mr. Schlotter said that the Study Team takes a lot of care in planning for each CAG meeting and acknowledged that some meetings do flow better than others, but that this study is unique in terms of the size of the CAG and processes used. Mr. Schlotter said it may be helpful to get more input from the CAG regarding meeting formats and processes.

Richard Cridlebaugh (East Peoria Planning Commission) suggested dropping both Corridors P-2 and T-6, considering that over the next 20 or 30 years the western portion of the study area will continue to develop, and recommended moving forward with only the two corridors east of Washington.

Shelli McClellan (Property Impacts) questioned the overall need for the Eastern Bypass project, asking if its need is based solely on economic development. Ms. McClellan noted local roadway improvements occurring throughout the study area independent of the Bypass to alleviate traffic

concerns. She also asked when the build/no-build decision would be made under the Tiered EIS process. Mr. Schlotter said that the build/no-build decision would come at the end of the Tier 2 EIS process, adding that the Tiered EIS process will result in two separate "Records of Decision," one for the final corridor, at the end of Tier 1, which should be completed in about a year, and one for the actual alignment and preliminary design, at the end of Tier 2 in about 3 or 4 years. Regarding the need for the project, Mr. Schlotter reminded Ms. McClellan and the other CAG members of the problem statement that was developed by the CAG early on in the process to help develop the project's Purpose and Need Statement. Mr. Schlotter said this statement will need to be refined during the NEPA process and the Study Team will be developing the updated Purpose and Need Statement in early 2013. Mr. Schlotter said that while distinctions between primary and secondary purposes were not required in the Corridor Study, such distinctions will be made in the Tiered EIS process. He further explained that a primary purpose is sometimes described as the "key driver" of the project, whereas secondary purposes are defined as "other desirable outcomes." Mr. Schlotter said that any project alternative that does not meet the primary purpose would be dropped but alternatives are not automatically dropped for not meeting secondary purposes. Mr. Schlotter said that at this time it appears economic development would be considered a secondary purpose for the project, but that the Study Team would discuss this further with the Federal Highway Administration. Mr. Schlotter said that improved mobility through a reduction in circuitous travel would be considered a primary purpose.

Greg Sinn (Tazewell County Board) said, based on his observations elsewhere in the region, that drivers will not drive out of their way to use a higher quality facility and that instead they will choose to drive on local roads, even if they're in worse condition. Mr. Sinn noted that D-13 is quite distant from the urban core of development and said that if the "inner ring" fills with development, an outer ring road can be considered at a much later date. Mr. Sinn said the Eastern Bypass needs to be a facility that people will actually use.

Keith Bachman (Community Impacts) said he would like to know the square mileage inside Interstate 474/Illinois Route 6 on the Peoria side of the river and see how that would compare to the four remaining corridors on the east side. He would also like to know the distance from the Illinois River to I-474 and each of the remaining corridors.

John Anderson (Commuting / Road Network) asked if keeping Corridor D-13 under consideration would extend the timeframe of the process. Mr. Schlotter said it should not, but noted the Study Team is interested in trying to get down to the smallest number of corridors that the FHWA and NEPA agencies appear comfortable accepting, in order to streamline the process as much as possible.

At that point, Mr. Schlotter stated that he sensed the CAG was not comfortable with trying to reach consensus on dropping Corridor D-13, to which the CAG members informally agreed. He then stated that the Study Team is comfortable with not pursuing the question any farther, at this point, and that the concerns expressed about dropping D-13 would be included in presentations to the FHWA and NEPA agencies.

Mike Lewis, of IDOT, urged the CAG members to keep tonight's discussion in mind, however, because next year we will need to make a decision about a single corridor, and there will be some challenges ahead. Mr. Lewis said the statements made by the CAG members this evening were very valuable to IDOT because they further clarify the values of the community, which will assist in the decision-making process. Mr. Lewis asked the CAG to remember that the role of the CAG is not to debate the build/no-build decision but to help the Study Team determine the optimal location for the project, which will then be compared against the "No Build" alternative.

Mr. Schlotter then read to the CAG a letter from CAG member Scott Punke, who could not attend the meeting (see Attachment 2). In his letter, Mr. Punke, who represents the City of Eureka, asked the CAG to continue to consider Corridor D-13 for its regional benefits, especially for Eureka.

Mr. Schlotter briefly discussed the topic of community cohesion, which Ms. McClellan had brought up earlier in the meeting. Mr. Schlotter explained that guidance from the Federal Highway Administration defines community cohesion as existing when neighborhoods have strong social ties. In other words, a neighborhood is said to have a high degree of cohesiveness if its residents frequently interact or share activities together. A project that severs or disrupts those interactions is said to have a community cohesion impact. Mr. Schlotter stated that the representative bands for the Eastern Bypass were developed to try to avoid dividing neighborhoods in such a manner, but that the Sunnyland area may pose a community cohesion concern. Mr. Schlotter also mentioned a related impact described as the "barrier effect," noting that a project can sometimes result in an actual, physical barrier between land uses, and that it can also sometimes create a "psychological" barrier in the minds of some who live or work in the area. Mr. Schlotter said the Tier 1 process will include an analysis of these kind of cohesion and barrier effects.

Mr. Schlotter then brought up the question of project funding, particularly with respect to the ratio of state to federal contributions, which was a question raised by Mr. Cridlebaugh earlier in the meeting. Mr. Lewis said that at this stage IDOT cannot predict what the exact ratio would be for construction, but that a ratio of 90 percent federal and 10 percent state is common for similar projects.

There being no further comments related to previous agenda items, Mr. Schlotter turned to the meeting's remaining item.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5 -- MEETING WRAP-UP**

### **Opportunity for All to Hear and Discuss General Questions and Comments**

Mike Godar (Economic) acknowledged the members of the general public who attended the meeting and said he was happy they got a chance to observe how CAG meetings operate and how the process works. Mr. Godar said the meeting was a good education for the public and thanked the local citizens for taking time out of the holiday season to observe the meeting.

Pete Streid (Agriculture) asked if there was some minimum traffic volume that the Bypass would need to attract before it would be approved for construction. Mr. Lewis said that with lower volume

roadways it is sometimes harder to justify a limited-access facility, but there is no standard for minimum traffic volumes.

Bill Dietrich (Agriculture) reminded the CAG to think more than 20 years down the road, noting that 2045 is the year used for the traffic projections. Mr. Dietrich noted that even then, the Dee-Mack Road corridor still has low volumes predicted. Mr. Schlotter said 2045 was chosen as the “design year” based on the IDOT standard practice of using the year that is 20 years beyond the predicted year that a facility would be opened to traffic.

Rudy Habben (Heart of Illinois Sierra Club) suggested conducting a study with the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission to integrate the Eastern Bypass planning with other future land use planning efforts in the region, noting that Tazewell County still needs a good north-south road. Mr. Schlotter said that secondary impacts, such as land use implications and future traffic volumes on the existing roadway network, will be looked at during the Tiered EIS process. Mr. Habben suggested also studying a widening of Illinois Route 26, regardless of the Bypass corridor selected, because it will become a major access point to any future Illinois River crossing.

Caroline Schertz (Environment) asked if there was any mechanism in place that would allow portions of the overall project to be divided into construction segments, which might allow a new Illinois River crossing to be approved and constructed before the rest of the highway. Mr. Schlotter said it was possible to do that under the Tiered EIS structure, but a complete Tier 1 EIS for the full corridor would be required first. Steve Jaeger (Heart of Illinois Regional Port District) warned about building a “bridge to nowhere,” if it didn’t connect to a suitable facility. Mr. Schlotter said that such an arrangement would require identifying what is known as “logical termini,” ensuring that suitable connections were in place.

There being no other general comments, Mr. Schlotter then reminded the members of the public in attendance that public comments are always welcome throughout all stages of the study process. Mr. Schlotter invited the public to make comments at tonight’s meeting, after the official meeting was adjourned, or, alternatively, to contact IDOT later, using the US mail or the study’s web site.

#### **Documentation of Any Follow Up Tasks**

Mr. Schlotter then stated he did not note any immediate action items for the CAG or the Study Team as a result of tonight’s meeting.

#### **Reminder of Next Events and Meeting Adjournment**

Mr. Schlotter stated that the Study Team will continue to keep the CAG informed regarding progress made with the Federal Highway Administration and the tiering process, and that the general public would also be kept informed. Mr. Schlotter reminded the CAG that another CAG meeting will be scheduled if the study changes significantly over the next several months as a result of the review by the Federal Highway Administration and the other NEPA agencies.

There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Schlotter adjourned the meeting, at 8:55 p.m., thanking the CAG for their hard work and participation.



**ATTACHMENT 1**

**Verbatim Transcription  
of  
Flip Chart Notes  
From 12/6/12 CAG Meeting #11**

GUIDELINES

RESPECT THE TIME OF THE GROUP IN THE LENGTH OF YOUR STATEMENT.

RESPECT THE GUIDANCE PROVIDED BY OUR FACILITATORS

RESPECT YOUR FELLOW CAG MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVES AND CONCERNS

BE AS HONEST AS POSSIBLE IN SHARING YOUR VIEWS AND REASONS BEHIND THESE VIEWS

WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT IDOT, THE FHWA AND THE REGULATORY AGENCIES SHOULD CONSIDER MOST IMPORTANT AS THE STUDY ENTERS THE TIER I PROCESS?

WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TO YOU, THE GROUP YOU REPRESENT AND YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS?

WHY ARE THESE THINGS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

RESIDENTIAL IMPACTS / AS WELL AS ON LAKE (AREA NEAR WAL-MART)

OPEN UP ECON DEVELOPMENT – TAZEWELL CO

INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, FARM IMPACT MINIMIZED WHILE PROVIDING RING ROAD AROUND CITY. TRANSPORTATION MORE EFFECTIVE (FUTURE)

GETTING TRAFFIC OFF ROADWAYS WHERE NOT BELONG TO GET FROM I-74 TO RIVER BRIDGE (SAFETY/FATALITIES)

FUNDING FOR THIS KIND OF FACILITY IN THE FUTURE

COMMUNITY COHESION ISSUE RE: WASHINGTON. WHO ULTIMATELY BENEFITS / UPGRADES RATHER THAN MAJOR PROJECT LIKE THIS

ROADS THAT WILL GET BLOCKED OFF (METAMORA / GERMANTOWN – (FARMERS GET FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER (BARRIER)

WHERE IS NEED WITH LEAST AMOUNT OF MILES WITH SAFETY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / SAFETY ASPECT / WITH ROAD IN THAT AREA

IMPACT WITHIN RING AREA WILL BE RESIDENTIAL OR INDUSTRIAL (BE LIKE PEORIA) SECONDARY IMPACTS

## AGRICULTURE IS A BUSINESS ALSO

TRAIL TOURISM ALONG ROAD FOR BIKING ALONG SIDE  
ROAD RECREATIONAL TRAILS AS QUALITY OF LIFE / BRING  
DISCRETIONARY MONEY (WEST OF WASHINGTON)

DIFFICULTY OF TRUCK TRAFFIC ACCESSING MOSSVILLE AREA  
AND MORTON - 474 EXPEDITE THIS

AGRICULTURE ONE OF LARGEST BUSINESSES / MAINTAIN  
/ IMPROVE WHAT WE HAVE (LOCKS AND DAMS AS WELL AS  
ROADS)

RICHEST AGRICULTURAL LAND IN WORLD / FIND HARD TO GIVE UP.  
BALANCE BETWEEN AGRICULTURE AND RESIDENTIAL LAND

VILLAGES WILL NEED SPEND MONEY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IN  
ORDER TO HAVE THE BENEFITS OF ECON DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS CRITICAL  
PROVIDES A TAX BASE  
SAFETY IS A KEY (AS RELATES TO RURAL ROADS)  
BRIDGE IS A COMMONALITY

NOT CONVINCED AS A NEED  
NEED TO CONSIDER OTHER ALTERNATIVES  
CERTAIN "CAMPS" SEE BENEFIT FOR THEMSELVES  
THIS IS A REGIONAL PROJECT  
NEED TO LOOK OUT 40-50 YEARS  
HIGH COST OF THIS PROJECT RATIO TO POPULATION

UNIQUE ENVIR FEATURES FORESTED RIVER BLUFFS SPR CREEK

AGENDA ITEM 4 – IDOT’S SUGGESTION TO DROP ONE MORE CORRIDOR

THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE – 20 YEARS

COMPARE ALL 4 CORRIDORS – NOT 2 IN Isolation

Federal Highway Administration - what is their thinking?

OK W / 3-4

Not just 2 eastern corridors - need all 4

Look at corridors that will be vital in 20 years

What is the need for the road? Upgrades are going on now.

Purpose & Need follow up

People won't use the road (D13) double ring may develop as a way to manage growth / traffic

Sq miles / acreage on east side of river - west side

How many miles is it?

Minimum traffic flow # that would make D13 “impossible”

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Letter from Scott Punke  
From 12/6/12 CAG Meeting #11**





CITY OF EUREKA  
128 N. MAIN ST. PHONE 467-2113  
EUREKA, ILLINOIS 61530  
[www.eurekaillinois.net](http://www.eurekaillinois.net)

December 5, 2012

Dear Members of the CAG for the Eastern Bypass Study:

I wish to respectfully submit the request for continued consideration of corridor D-13. For the City of Eureka, the Eastern Bypass, specifically corridor D-13, presents the best chance for greater economic development and enhanced transportation. Additionally, corridor D-13 would have the least impact on wetlands, proximity effects to both institutional and residential parcels, and streams. Mr. Mike Godar (at the May 5, 2011 CAG meeting), stated that the only "high" ratings for D-13 were the two historical sites along 116 and those could easily be avoided. After having reviewed the Corridor Screening and Impacts document, D-13 does not emerge as the obvious choice for elimination. In fact, offering an "eastern option" will ensure that further consideration remain balanced when considering this area as a whole. The impact of the bypass on the development in and around Eureka could be significant. For all of these reasons, I implore you to leave this corridor among the viable options being considered by the CAG.

Sincerely,

Scott Punke, Mayor  
City of Eureka