

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 #1 October 30, 2008

The first meeting of the Eastern Bypass Study Community Advisory Group (CAG) was held at the Countryside Banquet Facility, in Washington, on Thursday, October 30, 2008 at 6:00 P.M. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: to carry out a process for the selection of CAG members representing the general public; and, to conduct the first official CAG meeting.

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

- Eric Therkildsen (IDOT District Four Program Development Engineer)
- Mike Lewis (IDOT Eastern Bypass Study Team Leader)
- Tom Lacy (IDOT)
- Maureen Addis (IDOT)
- Greg Larson (IDOT)
- Shannon Russell (IDOT)
- Dave Zawada (H.W. Lochner, Inc.)
- Jeff Schlotter (H.W. Lochner, Inc.)
- Jamil Bou-Saab (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- George Ghareeb (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- Scott Presslak (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- Sande Wilke (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- Dennis Jennings (Technology of Participation (ToP) Network)
- Judy Weddle (Technology of Participation (ToP) Network)

Other attendees included:

- representatives of pre-existing area stakeholder groups who agreed to become CAG members (referred to as "standing group members")
- individuals from the general public who submitted a CAG membership application form (referred to as "applicants")
- individuals from the general public

Of the twenty-seven standing group members invited, eighteen representatives attended. Of the ninety-one applicants who were sent invitations, fifty-five attended. Three individuals were allowed to participate as walk-ins due to the availability of materials and meeting space. A small number of individuals from the general public were in attendance, as observers.

Upon arriving at the meeting, each invited attendee received an information packet containing the following materials: an agenda, a guide sheet of expected responsibilities and selection criteria for applicants, a list of standing group representatives, and reproductions of materials displayed at the study's July 29, 2008 Public Kickoff Meeting. Members of the general public received a meeting agenda, a written explanation of ground rules for public attendance, and a comment form.

The meeting's agenda consisted of three parts. Presented below is a summary of each part of the meeting, as outlined by the agenda.

AGENDA - PART 1

Orientation to the Eastern Bypass Community Advisory Group

Eric Therkildsen opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees. He then gave a brief description of the project's history and current status, followed by a brief statement about the role of the CAG in the Eastern Bypass Study process.

Next, Jeff Schlotter described the meeting's agenda, followed by an explanation of the responsibilities of the CAG and the selection process that would be used to determine the official CAG membership. Jeff also explained IDOT would provide meeting space in the future for non-selected applicants to meet on their own, if they so desire. He then asked if there were any questions about the agenda or member selection process.

In response, one applicant asked if the remaining six meetings would be held at the same banquet hall as this meeting or if there would be another venue. Jeff responded that meeting locations, as well as meeting dates and times, would be discussed as part of the CAG meeting to follow. He mentioned that Thursdays tend to be the most convenient night, relative to area board meetings, town meetings, and the like. Another applicant asked what to do if, during the selection process, an applicant was interested in more than one issue group. Jeff responded that applicants should choose the interest group that is most important to them personally.

There being no other questions, the selection process to choose the CAG members from the group of applicants began.

AGENDA - PART 2

Selection of “At Large” Membership

In brief, the process for selection of members from those who submitted application forms consisted of the applicants dividing into eight separate, issue-based groupings, with each group selecting one or more representatives to become official CAG members. The issue groups were: Agricultural Interests, Community Impacts, Commuting/Road Network, Controlled Growth, Cycling/Recreation/Alternative Modes of Transportation, Economic Development, Environment, and Property Impacts.

The selection process was guided by a facilitator at each table. The facilitators included the study team’s two professionals (Dennis Jennings and Judy Weddle), along with six “deputy” facilitators, each of whom had been trained in facilitation techniques. Jeff Schlotter, Dave Zawada, and Eric Therkildsen were available during the process to answer questions and provide help, as needed.

The issue groups discussed interests and concerns about the project. Each group identified the most important characteristics they would like to see in their CAG representative(s). Through further discussions, each issue group identified who, among the individuals at their table, would best reflect those important characteristics on the CAG. Those individuals were then selected for membership on the CAG by their issue group members. The results are presented in the table below.

Issue Table	Facilitator	Number of Applicants	Members Chosen
Agricultural Interests	Judy Weddle	5	2
Community Impacts	Dennis Jennings	9	3
Commuting/Road Network	Mike Lewis	9	2
Controlled Growth	Tom Lacy	6	2
Cycling/Recreation/Alternative Modes of Transportation	Maureen Addis	4	2
Economic Development	George Ghareeb	8	2
Environment	Shannon Russell	4	2
Property Impacts	Jamil Bou-Saab	12	5
Total CAG Applicants Selected			20

Contact information forms were distributed to the selected members and the non-selected members; the completed forms were then collected by IDOT for assembly into a master document. Each interest group will receive a list of the other applicants and their particular interest group CAG representatives for future use in planning meetings outside of the CAG, if desired.

During the applicant selection process, the standing group representatives in attendance were each issued a three-ring binder containing various relevant documents. The binders are a courtesy to the members and are intended to provide a convenient way for members to keep track of information related to the CAG. The binders included the draft Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) and an overview of the context audit procedures. Standing group representatives were encouraged to review these materials, talk amongst themselves, and to observe the applicant selection process.

The selection tables adjourned between 7:30 and 8:00, as their representatives were chosen. Those individuals not selected to be on the CAG were encouraged to stay and observe the first official meeting of the CAG.

AGENDA - PART 3

Initial CAG Meeting

Once all the tables had selected their CAG members, and following a break period, the first official CAG meeting was called to order, with the members selected from the applicants each receiving a three-ring binder, just as the standing group members received.

The meeting opened with brief introductions of all CAG members. Jeff Schlotter directed the meeting, taking several minutes to explain the goals and objectives of the Eastern Bypass Study and how the CAG can help achieve those objectives. This provided the backdrop for various activities assigned to the CAG members to complete before the next CAG meeting. These activities included: 1) reviewing the study's Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP), 2) writing down observations and feelings about the communities of the Bypass study area, and 3) writing down ideas about how the proposed project might affect those communities, both positively and negatively. These activities were referred to as "homework."

Next, Jeff opened the floor to questions. One member asked about the difference between "stakeholders" and the CAG. Eric Therkildsen explained that a stakeholder is any member of the public who has an interest in the project, for any reason. The role of the CAG is to represent these stakeholders to IDOT's Project Study Team.

Another member asked about getting more information about the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the NEPA process. Jeff suggested that members start at the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) website for more information about NEPA.

Post-meeting note: A good starting point for NEPA information can be found at:
<http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.asp>

One member inquired about creating a map of possible corridors. Jeff explained that there are no corridors identified yet, but that base maps of the study area can be provided to CAG members, if requested.

At this point, one member asked whether IDOT's Project Study Team (PST) present at the meeting could be introduced. The PST members responded by introducing themselves, as did members of the consulting firms who are working with IDOT on this study.

A member then asked about minutes for CAG meetings. Jeff explained that while formal minutes will not be taken at CAG meetings, the content of all CAG meetings will be noted in detail and circulated to CAG members and posted on the study's website.

One member asked for a list of CAG members. Jeff responded that IDOT will compile a list of CAG members and distribute it with the agenda package for the next meeting. He also alerted members to the fact that the CAG membership list would be incorporated into the study's Stakeholder Involvement Plan, and that this is considered a public document.

A member asked for a full list of "homework" assignments. Jeff directed the member to the binder documents for tasks expected of the CAG.

Another question was raised regarding the time frame the CAG would be in existence. Eric Therkildsen stated that it is IDOT's intent that the CAG be maintained throughout the entire project process, from the current corridor study through construction. He did note, however, that currently the project is only funded through the current corridor study phase and that the CAG membership status can be re-examined at the end of the corridor study.

At this point, as there were no further questions or comments, Jeff adjourned the meeting, reminding the CAG membership about the next CAG meeting, to be held on December 4, and that an agenda package will be sent out to all the CAG members about two weeks prior to the meeting date.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:20 P.M.