

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 #9

May 5, 2011

The ninth meeting of the Eastern Bypass Study Community Advisory Group (CAG) was held at the Countryside Banquet Facility, in Washington, on Tuesday, May 5, 2011, at 6:00 P.M.

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

- Mike Lewis (IDOT)
- Maureen Addis (IDOT)
- Tom Lacy (IDOT)
- Greg Larson (IDOT)
- Brittany McGinn (IDOT)
- Paula Green (IDOT)
- Jeff Schlotter (H.W. Lochner, Inc.)
- Ken Hemstreet (H.W. Lochner, Inc.)
- Jamil Bou-Saab (TERRA Engineering, Ltd.)
- Scott Presslak (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. At the end of this document is a verbatim transcription of the flip chart notes taken at the meeting.

WELCOME AND MEETING OBJECTIVES

The meeting opened just after 6:00 pm with Jeff Schlotter thanking the CAG for coming to the evening. He explained the evening's agenda, reviewed the documents distributed at the sign-in table, and explained that the focus of the meeting would be the completion of the consensus building process begun at the prior CAG meeting to determine which corridors should be retained for further consideration.

Jeff then asked the CAG members if they had any questions or comments on the summary notes from the previous two CAG meetings. Karl Bryning (Property Impacts) noted that he didn't agree to

eliminate Corridor D14 at the last meeting, even though it was dropped from further consideration and his table group put a drop card on the sticky wall. He said his original group was the one that proposed the corridor and he, as well as the people he represents, is in favor of it. He said it offers an alternative that is further out so it doesn't impose on people who didn't want to be by a highway, unless they want to move out to it. Judy noted Karl's concerns on the easels at the front of the room.

FOLLOW-UP ON QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS

Jeff then began the next agenda item, following up on questions raised at the previous CAG meeting. Before he discussed specific questions, however, he gave a very brief presentation about the difference between a corridor and a band, reminding the CAG members that a band is a hypothetical route location, drawn with just enough detail to provide a rough comparison of benefits and impacts between corridors.

Steve Jaeger (Heart of Illinois Regional Port District) asked what the width difference between a band and an alignment is and if a band is a preliminary version of an alignment. Jeff confirmed that Mr. Jaeger was correct, but noted bands are not as precise as alignments. Mike Lewis (IDOT) noted that alignments are typically 250 to 350 feet wide and may be up to 500 feet wide in some circumstances. The bands used in this study are 500 feet wide so as to be conservative in the impacts comparisons.

Jeff then responded to the questions raised at the last CAG meeting, as follows:

A suggestion had been made that each business that is shown as a hypothetical relocation on the bands be identified by name. Jeff explained the Study Team determined that this would not be particularly useful, given that the bands are hypothetical only and that they'll be changed or added to in the future. He further noted that while some commercial relocations are to be expected, the Study Team doesn't know exactly where they would be at this point. The numbers given in the matrices as relocations are only meant to be used to compare orders of magnitude between the corridors. He added that upon further investigation, the current bands along McClugage Road do not indicate Wal-Mart or Menards as a relocation.

It was suggested at the last CAG meeting that the Study Team should provide a count of all the residences in all the corridors. Jeff explained that, similar to the naming of relocations, the Study Team determined that data for the entire corridors wouldn't explain much in terms of impacts to residences. It was agreed that the previously-identified proximity effects (i.e., a count of the various structure types within one-quarter mile of each band) would be expanded by an additional quarter-mile. A document showing this additional information was distributed to the CAG members.

Questions were raised at the previous meeting about certain bands' effects in the area between Black Partridge Park and the Village of Metamora. A map was distributed that showed a close-up view of this area and that identified specific impacts associated with the bands (Corridors M8 and D12) that cross this area.

And finally, at the previous meeting a suggestion was made to rank the corridor impact data from low to high, including the color-coding that had been used for the benefits and screening matrices. A matrix containing the ranked and color-coded information was distributed.

Pete Fenner (Peoria Audubon Society) asked for clarification on the location of the cemetery next to Black Partridge Park. Jeff pointed out the location, noting this would be an item the Study Team would try to avoid. He further noted that avoiding the cemetery on the east would mean many residential impacts, and avoiding it on the west would mean impacts to the park and environmentally sensitive areas.

With no further questions or comments on these items, Jeff turned to the next agenda item.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS MEETING RESULTS

Jeff briefly explained the printed summary of the “sticky wall” exercise that was mailed to the CAG members before the meeting, describing that the first page was a depiction of the status of the green and pink cards as they appeared on the wall, followed by a verbatim transcription of each CAG table’s comments as written on the cards.

Karl Bryning said he would like to consider removing the pink (drop) card from his table’s recommendation for Corridor D14. Judy Weddle (ToP Facilitator) said some of the table groups didn’t have a card on all of the corridors because they may not have had time to finish at the last meeting, but that the goal was to have a drop or keep card for each of the corridors. Jeff Schlotter also noted that some of the tables may not have placed a card on the wall because they hadn’t agreed yet whether to drop or keep the corridor. He also reminded the group of the definition of consensus. It is not necessarily a unanimous decision, but rather it is having a majority of stakeholders in agreement, with the minority agreeing that their input was duly considered. Jeff also noted consensus is being achieved not only at the table groups, but also for the whole advisory group. In doing so, it is important for the minority opinion to be expressed so that nothing is missed that might change the CAG’s recommendations.

Jeff then described some of the documents given to the CAG members at the sign-in table. These documents were for members’ use only if they thought the documents would be helpful. Jeff explained that the 11 inch x 17 inch sheets present data showing pairs of corridors where significant lengths of their bands are common and only short lengths follow different paths. He explained that while the sheets contain a great deal of data, IDOT did not intend that the CAG members read all of the information on every page; instead, the sheets were intended to provide information that may be useful during discussions of specific corridors at individual tables. Jeff further explained that: 1) impact information on the sheets was color coded for quick visual reference; 2) the data were separated into band segments that are common and that differ so those that differ can be more easily compared; 3) the benefit information shown is for entire corridor lengths because this information generally could not be separated into segments; and, 4) information for the Illinois River crossing cost and total construction cost was also included on the sheets.

Another document given to the CAG members compared Illinois River crossing locations. Jeff explained that at the previous CAG meeting, the group had discussed the pros and cons of the north and south river crossings. In order to facilitate any further discussion of this comparison that may arise, the Study Team compiled impact data between Illinois Route 26 and Illinois Route 6 for each crossing.

Rudy Habben (Heart of Illinois Sierra Club) asked if the construction cost is about \$600 million for each of the corridors. Jeff responded that, yes, the corridors are relatively similar in cost. The estimated costs for each of the corridors are shown in the impact matrix given to the CAG members. He reminded the group, however, that the current objective is to find a corridor that has the highest benefits with the least impacts or a combination of benefits and impacts that is considered the best.

William Dietrich (Agriculture) asked if there was information on traffic counts. Jeff replied that the 11 inch x 17 inch comparison sheets included anticipated traffic volumes for the proposed corridors being compared.

Steve Jaeger asked if their table groups should focus on the corridors they haven't yet decided upon. Jeff said yes, but they could also go back to corridors they had already made a decision on, if they felt the need to.

Steve Van Winkle (City of Peoria) noted that some corridors were not in the comparison sheets. Jeff said that the comparisons included were ones that had quite a bit of similarity or otherwise seemed helpful to compare, and that if there are other pairs the members would like to compare, then the screening matrices and other information from the previous meeting could be used to make the comparisons. Jeff further explained that the 11 x 17 sheets do not contain any new information; they simply organize the data so that a side-by-side comparison is easier to make.

With no further questions or comments on these items, the Study Team's facilitators, Dennis Jennings and Judy Weddle, lead the next agenda item.

COMPLETION OF GROUP EXERCISE

As was done at the previous CAG meeting, two "sticky walls" were set up, one in the front of the room showing the corridors currently being considered and the second on the side of the room, used for showing corridors where consensus had already been reached to eliminate them. (These included P1, T5, and D14.) The front wall had been set up exactly as it appeared at the end of the previous CAG meeting.

Dennis and Judy explained that this exercise was meant to be a continuation from the previous CAG meeting and that CAG members would be welcome to make any additions or changes to their cards from the prior meeting. Dennis said that the first goal of the exercise was to eliminate all the blank spaces on the wall that did not have either a "keep" or "drop" card from each table. Once all the cards were assembled and placed on the sticky wall, the group would reconvene for discussion and try to reach consensus on dropping additional corridors.

Corridors M8, D11, D12 - Dropped

Once all the cards were on the sticky wall, three corridors (M8, D11, D12) received “drop” cards from all nine tables. While all nine tables recommended dropping the three corridors, the decisions were not unanimous. Some tables, such as Table 6, indicated that there was disagreement at the table regarding their decision. In particular, Mr. Bryning (Table 6) noted that his table’s recommendation to remove D14 from consideration at CAG 8 also was not unanimous; Mr. Bryning requested that it be noted that while he was in agreement that consensus had been reached at his table – according to the CAG definition of consensus – he held a minority (opposing) view.

Corridor M9 - Dropped

Corridor M9 had eight “drop” cards and only one “keep” card (from Table 2). When Table 2’s representative, Mr. Fenner, was asked to discuss their table’s view, he said that the table elected to keep M9 because they felt it was a good corridor east of Washington, it was good for economic development, and it had lower residential impacts. Mr. Dietrich asked if Table 2 would consider keeping M10 and dropping M9 because of the northern Illinois River crossing. The table’s members said that they did not like the northern crossing of M9, but the economic development benefits would outweigh the inconvenience of a northern crossing. Mr. Fenner went on to say that corridor M10 still satisfied the concerns of Table 2 better than M9 and as long as M10 was carried forward, Table 2 would drop their support of M9. Mr. Fenner said that he wanted to make his table’s concerns known and that this wasn’t a corridor they would “go to the mat” for. Caroline Schertz (Environment) specified that since Table 2 mentioned not favoring the northern crossing, a “northern crossing” shouldn’t be included in the “minority view” notes. The CAG reached consensus on removing corridor M9 from consideration.

Corridor P3 - Dropped

Corridor P3 also received only one “keep” card, from Table 3. Mike Godar (Economic) indicated that corridor M10 satisfies the benefits of corridor P3, and Table 3 would agree to drop P3 in favor of M10. The CAG then reached consensus on dropping corridor P3.

Corridor P4 - Kept

Corridor P4 received a total of three “keep” cards and six “drop” cards. Table 6 representatives mentioned that the table had been divided on the P4 corridor and chose to place a “keep” card on the sticky wall, but not without some objections. Mr. Jaeger said that it was important to keep the corridor as an alternative to the eastern corridors, stating that while the corridor has low economic benefits, it is also the shortest route, which would make it cheaper to construct.

Shelli McClellan (Property Impacts) said that her table (Table 4) supported the corridor because it would lead to fewer disruptions in the existing street network further east, especially in terms of dead end streets, for both drivers and cyclists.

Paul Corcoran (Property Impacts) said that the route would carry high volumes of traffic and, while his table (Table 7) was not sure of the economic development benefits of the corridor, the corridor is still worth presenting to the public to consider. Ms. Schertz added that Table 7 was divided on the value of a high traffic count because this may not necessarily be indicative of travelers served. She cited as an example the notion that if the new highway simply removes cars from IL 116 along the

river, it would not provide much benefit for travelers from Germantown Hills or Metamora. Mr. Corcoran said that Table 7 would be willing to move to consensus on the corridor, provided their minority viewpoint was heard and discussed.

Kevin Rund (Illinois Farm Bureau) said that an "inner" corridor should be retained for consideration because the routing would have lower construction costs and the corridor's higher volume is due to a more logical traffic flow in the area. Ms. Schertz pointed out that the representative band in corridor P4 would take 440 acres of forest, including parts of the songbird flyway along the Illinois River, that it was the only corridor that would divide a community, that it would require 50 acres of wetlands, and it has 1.5 times as many residential impacts as the next-highest corridor.

Mr. Van Winkle suggested carrying P2 forward as a viable alternative to P4 because P2 has the second-highest traffic volumes and still maintains more of an "inner" routing.

Ken Maurer (Community Impacts) noted that P4 would offer little economic benefit to Germantown Hills and Metamora.

Scott Davis (City of Pekin) said that the group needs to think in terms of the future year when the highway would actually be completed and opened and not just on today's conditions, saying that by 2025, any new development in Woodford County would be underserved by a P4 routing. Mr. Davis said that 50 years ago, P4 would have been the only logical routing.

Mr. Dietrich said that economic development based on the highway is not guaranteed, noting that the town of Goodfield gained only one long-term job from Interstate 74 coming through town.

Ms. McClellan said that a route like P4, which parallels IL 116, would be a waste of money.

Mr. Bryning said the roadway would be more heavily used and that nearby residents are already accustomed to living near traffic, unlike residents who live farther "out" in the study area, away from the urban core.

Mr. Rund stressed the need for a western alternative for the project.

Bill Royer (Property Impacts) said the corridor ties in well with the existing I-74/474 interchange, still uses the southern crossing, and is still three to four miles farther inland than IL 116. Mr. Royer also mentioned that with a bypass farther west, a future outer bypass may be needed near Deer Creek in 50 years.

Ken Klotz (Economic) said that a corridor like P4 neglects communities that need access, like Germantown Hills and Metamora.

Pete Streid (Agriculture) said that Germantown Hills residents would not travel east to access the Bypass, and he can see them using the P4 corridor.

Mr. Royer said Washington residents would act the same way.

Mr. Bryning said that eastern alignments may divide unincorporated Metamora, and he noted the benefits of the Illinois River crossing would still be realized with P4.

Mr. Habben suggested calling for consensus on the corridor. Consensus to drop the corridor could not be reached, however, so the CAG agreed to maintain the P4 corridor for further consideration.

Corridors P2, T6, T7, M10, D13 – Kept

Corridor D13 received six “drop” cards and three “keep” cards. Mr. Godar said the only impacts that were rated “high” for the corridor were due to two historic sites along IL 116, which could easily be avoided. Mr. Godar said that a far eastern option should be kept for public review and opinion.

Mr. Davis noted this was the same logic used to keep P4 in consideration.

Ms. McClellan noted that the route runs parallel to existing highways, but said the corridor still merited consideration.

Mr. Godar stated that a corridor like D13 would encourage development further east (“if you build it, they will come”) and that a true ring road needs to be considered.

Mr. Klotz said D13 would not be as disruptive to families and homes.

Mr. Rund said that most of the benefits of D13 were better satisfied by corridor M10.

Doug Damery (Cycling, Recreation and Alternative Modes) said that a far eastern corridor would require more infrastructure improvements to connect the highway to the existing network.

Ms. Schertz said that the corridor would take significant amounts of agricultural land, some of the “richest farmland in the world.”

Ken Klopfenstein (Tri-County Regional Planning Commission) said that his table tried to identify one corridor from each family because that would provide IDOT with the best opportunity to present a wider range of options to the general public. Mr. Klopfenstein suggested simply coming to consensus now to approve the six remaining corridors (P2, P4, T6, T7, M10, D13) to carry forward to the public meeting and resume the corridor decision-making process after the public has had an opportunity to review and comment on the corridors.

Dick Cridlebaugh (City of East Peoria) suggested the group look at the location of I-474 and Illinois Route 6 on the west and see what is similar in proximity to the population on the east side of the metro area. They could also look at how Illinois Route 6 is functioning today and if that is how an Eastern Bypass would function. A western corridor connects the spokes of the existing highway network, which is good, but it would also disrupt some flora and fauna in that corridor, which would need to be considered as well.

In regards to Mr. Klopfenstein's suggestion to move forward with the six remaining corridors, a majority of the CAG members agreed and came to consensus on carrying forward corridors P2, P4, T6, T7, M10 and D13.

General Discussion and Next Steps

Mr. Schlotter then took the floor and described the next steps for the Eastern Bypass Study. Jeff said the next step is to hold a public meeting to show the work performed on the project since the last meeting and explain the process the Study Team and CAG took to get from the original twenty corridors down to the fourteen corridors, with representative bands, and now down to six corridors. The public would have the opportunity to review the corridors and provide comments and feedback to the Study Team and the CAG. CAG members are encouraged to attend the public meeting to help respond to concerns and questions of the general public and to hear the comments first hand. The public meeting would likely be mid-summer, sometime in late July or early August.

Mr. Davis asked how the public meeting would fit into the consensus-building process used for the project. Mr. Schlotter said that the public meeting would be used to inform the public and solicit comments from the public, which would then be compiled, analyzed, and presented to the CAG at the next CAG meeting. The CAG would then be responsible for coming to consensus on the six corridors based on not only their impacts and benefits but also on the public input received.

Gary Fellhauer (Controlled Growth) asked how the public would be informed of the public meeting. Jeff said the study team will send newsletters to all mailing addresses within the study area and will use newspaper advertisements, press releases to local media outlets, flyers posted throughout the study area, and website updates, to ensure the public is aware of the meeting.

Beyond the public meeting, Jeff said that the study team will begin refining the data and the representative bands as the next step in the corridor selection process. Once a preferred corridor (or corridors) is chosen, a public hearing will be held at which all public comments will be recorded and a transcript of the meeting prepared and included for the official record of the study.

Mr. Habben asked about the format of the public meeting. Mr. Schlotter said the meeting would likely be similar to the prior public meeting, in an open-house format with an automated audio-visual presentation and exhibits set up with study team members on hand for dialogue with the general public.

IDOT's Eastern Bypass Team Leader, Mike Lewis, said that while all corridors, even corridors removed from consideration, would be presented at the meeting in some form, the Study Team was still working on the details of the meeting.

Mr. Corcoran asked if the Study Team would be displaying the representative bands with the corridors at the public meeting. Mr. Lewis responded that the bands were simply working lines for the corridors and the study team would have to discuss whether or not to show them to the public. Mr. Corcoran said that showing the bands would run the risk of having the public assume that those

were alignments and it may be easier to just mention that the study team and the CAG used bands to determine representative impacts.

Randall Jacobs (Property Impacts) said that the public may feel IDOT is hiding something if the bands are not shown.

Mr. Godar asked how the team would show the public twenty corridors being reduced to six. Jeff responded that one purpose of the meeting is to educate the public about the process that is being used, and that the corridor selection process might be presented using graphics.

Mr. Godar expressed concern that showing more than six corridors may lead to confusion from the public.

Mr. Lewis stressed that IDOT is trying to be as transparent in this process as possible. He said the representative bands are just tools at this point, like many other tools that have been used by IDOT and the CAG. He further explained that the potential problem in showing the bands is that the attention of the general public could focus exclusively on the bands themselves and not on “big picture” items, like whether it is better for a corridor to be located east or west of Washington, or east or west of Germantown Hills. It is big picture items like these that are most important at this stage of the study.

When Mr. Lewis asked the CAG members if they felt strongly that the representative bands should be shown, only one member raised his hand. This was taken to mean the CAG did not have a strong preference. Mr. Lewis indicated that IDOT would do what it could to provide a transparent explanation while keeping the focus on the bigger picture.

Ms. McClellan said that there is still suspicion among the public because of the public’s experience with the previous ring road study. She stated that IDOT needs to be realistic in their expectations and try to counter them with as much transparency as possible.

Mr. Lewis said that the CAG’s work has been a large contributing factor in overcoming the negative perception of the previous study.

With there being no other questions or comments, the meeting adjourned just after 9:00 PM.

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FLIP CHART NOTES

The following is a verbatim transcription of the flip chart notes from CAG Meeting No. 9, held on May 5, 2011.

Corridor D-13

Table 3

- Important to present an eastern option to public to compare
- True ring road / parallel road
- Low residential impact
- Fewest disruptions, relocations, proximity effects
- (D-10 meets positive things mentioned about D-13)
- Farther out road is more require to improve connecting roads
- Farther out road is more ag land taken
- Tried to select one from each of 4 families

Which of these routing is most similar as I474 + Route 6? Is doing?
Do you want to complete a facility that is similar to _____

Corridor M-9

Table 3

- East of Washington/EC Dev Plans for Wash
- If M-9 dropped, M-10 this is the only other corridor going east of Washington, [redacted]
- Do not like the north bridge / in agreement with the majority

Corridor P-3

Table 3 is satisfied by M-10

Table 6 Keep it in the mix / to serve econ dev

Table 4 Concerns about cycling/dead end streets

- Higher traffic count / keep open for that reason
- Good one to have as a clear option for public

Table 7 High traffic not equate with greatest number of people served
Industrial highest traffic count of any corridor

Table 6 More logical traffic flow

- Part of songbird flyway

Table 7 60 acres of wetlands

- Major proximity effects
- P-2 2nd highest traffic volumes
- It is closer proximity to river
- Seems to have a lot of support

P-4 cuts out people in Germantown/Metamora
Not provide road N-S
(lot of differing perspectives on this)

Table 6	Ties in with 474 and ties in north where we want see as by pass road / better If can tie in close to city
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Alternative to P-4

Table 3 Need to keep long view if build road near river

Table 6 This is a road people clearly would use

- The ones that are far out are "too far out"

Questions/concerns (Karl – beginning of evening meeting)

Minority view:

- D-14 – Far out, value of most east route
- Putting road where people can choose to "move by it" rather than one imposed upon [them].