

Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: November 14, 2006 Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: Illinois Dept. of Transportation, District One, Schaumburg, IL
Regarding: Concurrent Point No. #2 Meeting

Introduction

The purpose of this meeting was to seek Concurrence on the selection of alternatives to be carried forward for further detailed analysis. Concurrence Point #1 - approval of Purpose and Need for the project - had occurred.

Prior to this meeting, draft copies of Chapter 3 of the Environmental Assessment - Alternatives - had been distributed to the participants. The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation briefly recapping the project background and Purpose and Need. The bulk of the presentation was on the selection of the Alternatives as summarized from Chapter 3.

Presentation Highlights

The three principal alternatives that must be considered for a roadway project adding Single Occupancy Vehicle capacity are:

- Congestion Management Alternative (CMS)
- No-Action Alternative
- Build Alternative

To be considered reasonable, an alternative must address the purpose and need. The CMS and No-Action Alternatives do not address purpose and need; they cannot address the capacity, operational and safety concern of the project. CMS features will be incorporated as practical into any proposed alternative.

Historically, eight crossing locations were considered for this project, extending from 135th Street on the north to Theodore-Rosalind on the south. The three northerly most of those crossing locations are no longer feasible because of new nature preserves or the vacation of a roadway for an airport expansion. This reduces the focus area to Thornton-Renwick on the north and Theodore-Rosalind on the south.

Within this area the evaluation considered 6 crossing locations with 14 associated alignments. In the next stage alternatives were further eliminated as not addressing purpose and need or as adversely affecting a Nature Preserve. Theodore-Rosalind-Wolf directs traffic too far around

the project area to satisfy purpose and need, Stateville-Division crosses a Nature Preserve, and IL Route 7 does not satisfy purpose and need in that it does not provide a new corridor.

As the purpose of the development of alternatives is to provide a full range of alternatives for study, but not every possible alternative, the remaining alternatives were assessed for compliance with purpose and need. They were then screened to eliminate those whose impacts rendered them obviously inferior to another alternative.

The recommendation was to drop Theodore-Rosalind-Gougar and Caton Farm-Weber-Renwick-Thornton due to the large number of displacements. Alignment alternatives involving Cedar Road were also recommended to be dropped due to impacts to the activity center of Homer Township.

The recommendation was then to carry forward for further evaluation the following alternatives:

- Caton Farm - Oak - Gougar Alternative
- Caton Farm - Oak - Middle Alternative
- Caton Farm - Oak - Bruce -Gougar Alternative
- Caton Farm - Oak - Bruce - Middle Alternative
- Caton Farm - Bruce -Gougar Alternative
- Caton Farm - Bruce - Middle Alternative

Discussion

At this point the meeting was opened to discussion. US FWS disagreed with the assessment of alternatives to be carried forward because of the proximity of the Hines Emerald Dragonfly (HED) to the Caton Farm - Bruce and the Caton Farm - Oak alternatives. Their preference is for an alignment still further south away from the known areas of HED. US FWSs concern is that while the alignments presented maybe outside of the designated critical habitat areas, they appear to be in close proximity. It was agreed that more detailed information is needed on the proximity of the alternatives to the HED critical habitat areas. The project team agreed to prepare and distribute more detailed exhibits using the available information.

USFWS indicated that additional population surveys may be required to establish if the proposed alternatives are outside of impact areas. It was noted that before additional surveys are undertaken, it would be effective to limit the study area only to reasonable corridors. US FWS indicated that regardless of which Caton Farm alignment is selected, formal consultation will be required.

US FWS indicated that a Theodore-Rosalind alternative would be better from their perspective since it is further away from the HED critical habitat areas. Alternatives north of the Caton Farm - Bruce and the Caton Farm - Oak alternatives are not acceptable because they would be in the critical habitat areas. It was noted that the Theodore-Rosalind alternative was likely to receive heavy public opposition due to the socio-economic impacts indicated in Chapter 3, particularly along the section of Theodore Road west of Illinois 53. This section of Theodore Road was reconstructed as a three lane roadway by IDOT within the last ten years. IDOT had initially planned to reconstruct Theodore as a multi-lane roadway, but that plan was

rejected due to the dense residential character of the corridor and the resulting residential impacts. Even greater public opposition would be anticipated to this corridor as a new river crossing.

US EPA noted that while they are also concerned about T&E species, they do not support studying alternatives that are otherwise unacceptable. It was agreed that FHWA will schedule a subsequent consultation meeting with US FWS to further discuss potential impacts to T&E from the 6 proposed alternatives and whether additional alternatives or alternative refinements should be considered. US ACOE (unable to attend this meeting) and US EPA will also be invited. Until this is resolved, there will be no public meetings.

Depending upon the outcome of that meeting, another Concurrent Point #2 meeting may not be required. The findings of the meeting could be treated as an addendum to this meeting.

Meeting Concludes.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.