



Potential I-55 Improvements
at Airport Road and at IL 126/Essington Road
Community Advisory Group Meeting #1

Overview

The Villages of Romeoville and Bolingbrook are conducting a Phase I Preliminary Engineering & Environmental study for potential interchange improvements along I-55 between the US Route 30 and Weber Road interchanges. The public involvement portion of this study will follow the guidelines set forth by NEPA and the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). A key component of the success of the study is public involvement. As part of the robust public involvement process, a Community Advisory Group (CAG) was created. The CAG is a voluntary group of stakeholders that includes community officials, residents, business owners and users of I-55. The CAG serves an active part of the decision making process. The role of the group is to provide detailed insight of community and stakeholder interests

Community Advisory Group Meeting #1

The first CAG meeting for the potential I-55 interchange improvement study was held on May 17, 2011 at the Bolingbrook Fire Station #5 from 9:30 am – 11:30 am. The meeting included introductions, distribution of the CAG binders, a PowerPoint presentation, and small group exercises. The exercises were created to facilitate discussions aimed at creating the project's Problem Statement and Purpose and Need Statement.

Meeting Notification

To announce the May 17, 2011 CAG meeting, an e-mail was sent to CAG members and resource agencies on May 3, 2011. A formal invitation letter was mailed out on May 6, 2011 to all CAG members and alternates.



April 29, 2011

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. NAME,

On behalf of the Villages of Romeoville and Bolingbrook, we would like to invite you to serve as a member of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) being assembled for the study of the potential I-55 improvements at Airport Road and at IL 126/Essington Road. As a member of the CAG, you will play a vital role in assisting the project team throughout the planning phase of this important project.

Recognizing the natural, cultural, and regional significance of the area, we have implemented a public involvement effort based on IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions process. This is a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach that includes a public involvement strategy focused on stakeholder outreach. The primary goal is to develop a transportation improvement solution that fits within the context of the surrounding human and physical environment.

Throughout the planning and environmental review for the project, the CAG will address many challenging and important issues. The project team is committed to utilizing extensive public involvement, both from this CAG and the general public, as future recommendations are made regarding this project. The CAG will assist the project team in setting goals for the project corridor, reviewing traffic and environmental information, and providing feedback on the design of alternatives.

The group is expected to meet six times over the course of the next 30 months. These meetings usually last approximately 2 hours and are filled with information required to make informed recommendations on the project. Throughout the process, we would like you to help the project team engage and inform the public and key stakeholders about this project.

The first CAG meeting will be held on May 17th, 2011 from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM at Bolingbrook Fire Station No. 5 located at 1900 Rodeo Drive, Bolingbrook. Please let this serve as your formal invitation to participate as a member of the CAG for this project. At the first meeting, there will be a presentation on the study process, schedule, public outreach program, and CAG roles and responsibilities, as well as group exercises.

Thank you for your willingness and commitment to serve in this vital capacity. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact me, Dave Heslinga, with any questions or comments. I can be reached at 630-724-9200 or via email at airportand126study@v3co.com.

Sincerely,

David P. Heslinga
Project Manager
V3 Companies



The following CAG members were in attendance:

Jim Sanders, Plainfield
Laurie McPhillips, Will Co Board & Forest Preserve District of Will Co.
Scot Dutler, Plainfield resident
Cameron Bettin, Plainfield Park District
George M. Milton, Plainfield resident
Dennis Poma, Plainfield resident
Barb Poma, Plainfield resident
Michael S. Lambert, Plainfield resident
Bill Lamb, Plainfield resident
Tom Mooney, Plainfield resident
Randall Jessen, Plainfield Superintendent of Public Works
Greg Bott, Plainfield Park District
Nathan Darga, Romeoville Planner
Don Hornig, Romeoville resident
Eric Olson, Romeoville resident
Suzanne Benedetto, Plainfield resident
Dave Sniegowski, Plainfield property owner
Therese Castiglioni, Airport Support Network representative
Gregory Dover, Bolingbrook business owner
Mike Evans, Bolingbrook Chamber of Commerce
Kevin Calkins, Plainfield resident
Jon Zabrocki, Romeoville Village Engineer
Thomas Pawlowicz, Bolingbrook Assistant Village Engineer
Andi French, Plainfield Township
Ronda Klocko, Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital
Richard Hilliard, Bolingbrook resident and Police employee
Ron See, Bolingbrook resident
Tim Rogers, Bolingbrook resident
John Noak, Mayor of Romeoville
Dr. Bernice Holloway, Romeoville Village Clerk
Ken Griffin, Romeoville Village Trustee
Kim Allen, Romeoville resident
Brad Johnstone, Plainfield resident

Also present at the meeting were 15 members of the general public and 2 representatives from Clark Dietz who are conducting a Phase I study for improvements at the Weber Road interchange with I-55. Jessica Feliciano, Patrick Rinoso and TaRhonda White from IDOT were present. Dave Heslinga, Mike Rechterik, Eric Lindemann, Nate Groff and Heidi Voirol of V3 Companies and Mark Dwiggins from the Upchurch Group presented the meeting and facilitated the small group exercises.



Summary of Activities

The meeting began with a welcome and introductions of the project team members, CAG members and the general public. CAG members were divided into five groups for upcoming group exercises and each was given a binder with information.

The presentation began with a review of CAG ground rules, NEPA overview, project schedule, Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process and role of the CAG, project history and a summary of comments received from the project's first Public Information Meeting held on February 22, 2011. Participants were next given instructions for Exercise 1a and invited to discuss the question "Is there a need for improved access to I-55 between the U.S. 30 and Weber Road interchanges? Why or why not?" Facilitators collected the group feedback and presented the information to the entire audience present. The clear majority of the CAG participants agreed that interchange improvements were needed within the study area.

Summary of comments received:

Why is it needed?

- Better I-55 access is needed for the surrounding communities
- Current congestion is very heavy
- Currently it is very difficult to travel North/South at certain times of the day
- To facilitate development of businesses and new residences
- Weber Road congestion is terrible and has negative effects to local businesses, residents and commuters
- Need better access to I-55 Northbound/Southbound
- Would improve safety by opening up routes for emergency responders
- Improves safety by relieving congestion on Weber Road

Why not?

- May increase traffic and hazards to school children on local roads
- May negatively impact local roadways
- Not sure how improvements to the I-55 interchange at Weber Road will relieve current congestion issues

The small groups were then asked to consider the question in Exercise 1b "If access improvements such as new interchanges are to be evaluated as part of this study, what are the community values, environmental resources and economic interests that need to be considered in this evaluation?" The group was asked to categorize their responses into community values, environmental resources and economic interests and presented to the larger audience. The results are categorized in the following table.



CAG Meeting 1 – Group Exercise Results 1b

Community Values	Environmental Resources	Economic Interests
Recreational areas, parks including Four Seasons park	Wetlands and waterways	Access promotes economic development
Improved residential access	Noise and air pollution impacts	Reduction in traffic will improve the business environment
Preserve neighborhood identity	Impact to the Natural Habitat	Negative and positive effect to property values
Safety is a priority	Forest Preserves	Provides more opportunities for businesses
Buffer zones for residential areas	Soil Contamination	Cuts down on travel time and gas costs
Reduce noise and air pollution in residential areas	Natural areas	Provide solutions for projected increased traffic volumes
School safety in the area of 135 th and Essington should be considered	Lily Cache Creek	Allow for economic development on west side of I-55 and along 143 rd Street
Preserve historical resources at 143 rd , historic farmstead & quarries	Create bike paths, sidewalks and use landscaping	Opposition to increased truck traffic along Lockport Road.
Improve feel of downtown Plainfield by alleviating traffic through the downtown		Without free flowing roadways, an accident can shut down Weber and hurt local businesses
Reduce traffic in older neighborhoods		Improves economic opportunities for small businesses
Improved access improves the quality of life but may provide more access for crime		Economic opportunities increase with improved truck routes
Minimize negative impacts to residents		Better access brings bigger/more companies and provides for jobs and an improved tax base



Following the small group exercises the Community Advisory Group meeting was opened to public comment. Six members of the general public made comments. All six members are residents of the Lakeland Club on Lake Mary Drive. The following is a list of some of the comments made:

- Appreciation that IDOT was “taking a step back” and not just revising the 1999 Study
- A plea to keep the residential areas in mind.
- A desire for safety as the top priority
- Concerns that any improvements at IL 126/Essington Road would have disastrous effects on their neighborhood including the local schools, the natural environment, the equestrian therapy riding center and their quality of life.
- Suggestions to move the improvements to Veterans Parkway
- Concerns about the impact noise, air, water and light pollution could have on the Lake Mary area.

IDOT thanked those that commented for their thoughts and assured them that their comments and public involvement mattered.