



IL 53 from W. Arsenal Road to US 52

Phase I Study

Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP)

For Agency and Public Involvement



Will County

Illinois Department of Transportation

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Version 1



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1. Introduction

The IL 53 Phase I Study from West Arsenal Road to US 52 was initiated in 2015 to address safety and operations along the IL 53 corridor. The study area is IL 53 from West Arsenal Road to US 52 (Doris Avenue) in Will County, Illinois. Refer to Exhibit A for the project location map.

The preliminary engineering and environmental study is anticipated to be processed as a Categorical Exclusion II (CE II) and be performed in accordance with procedures set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

1.1 IL 53 History

During World War II, this section of IL 53 was a strategic defense highway and designated as US 66. The roadway was constructed in 1926 and improved in 1945, due to the damage caused by heavy munition trucks. From 1926 to 1970, the roadway was an important transportation link between Will County and US 66, which was the primary road between Chicago and California. US 66 created an easy link to this highway which enabled goods from the region to be distributed westward.

This highway also enabled the transportation of munitions from the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant during wartime. The Joliet Army Ammunition Plant was originally known as the Elwood Ordnance Plant and the Kankakee Ordnance Works when they were authorized by the federal government in 1940. At peak production during World War II, over 10,425 people were employed at the two plants creating bombs, shells, mines, detonators, fuses, and boosters. The Elwood and Kankakee Plants were combined and redesignated the Joliet Arsenal in 1945, when operations were placed on standby. The Arsenal was reactivated during the Korean War and again during the Vietnam War. Production stopped in 1976 and by the late 1970s, most operations had ceased. The Joliet Army Ammunition plant was declared inactive in 1993. In 1997, the U.S. Army transferred land to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. This land is now known as the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

In 1994, IL 53 from Peotone Road to Interstate 80 was designated as Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA). The SRA system is a network of existing roads intended to supplement the existing and proposed expressway facilities by accommodating a significant portion of long-distance, high-volume automobile and commercial vehicle traffic in the region. In February of 1999, the Illinois Department of Transportation (Department) completed SRA Study 512. This study developed a conceptual improvement plan to improve transportation mobility along the corridor, which was made available for local agencies to use in their land use planning activities.

1.2 Context Sensitive Solutions

The project is being developed using elements and principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) per the Department's CSS Policy and Procedural Memorandum 48-06. CSS is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multi-modal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build, and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities that fit into and reflect the project's surroundings—its "context." Through early, frequent, and meaningful communication with stakeholders, and a flexible



and creative approach to design, the resulting projects should improve safety and mobility for the traveling public, while seeking to preserve and enhance the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of the settings within which they are located.

The CSS approach will provide stakeholders with the tools and information they require to effectively participate in the study process including providing an understanding of transportation planning guidelines, design guidelines, and the relationship between transportation issues (needs) and project improvements. In other words, using the CSS process should provide all project stakeholders a mechanism to share comments or concerns about transportation objectives and project improvements, as well as improve the ability of the project team to understand and address concerns raised. This integrated approach to problem solving and decision-making will help build community general understanding or agreement and promote involvement through the study process.

The IL 53 Study will utilize a collaborative approach that involves stakeholders to develop a facility that fits into its surroundings and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility. A Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) is critical to the success of a project. The SIP is a framework plan for the execution of CSS that is both comprehensive and flexible based on project needs; therefore, the SIP is subject to revision anytime events warrant.

The CSS approach strives to achieve the following:

- Understand the stakeholder's key issues and concerns.
- Involve stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- Establish an understanding of the stakeholder's role in the project.
- Address all modes of transportation.
- Set a project schedule.
- Apply flexibility in design to address stakeholder concerns whenever possible.

2. Goals and Objectives of the SIP

The purpose of the SIP is to provide a guide for implementing stakeholder involvement for the IL 53 Study. It is important to understand that the SIP by its nature is a work in progress and thus subject to revision every time events warrant.

2.1 Stakeholder Involvement Plan Objectives

The SIP provides the framework for achieving agreements and communicates decision making between the general public, public agencies, and government officials to identify transportation solutions for the project. The SIP outlines specific outreach activities, including public meetings and hearings, stakeholder meetings, and supporting media and communication techniques.

This SIP is designed to ensure that stakeholders are provided with opportunities to be informed and be engaged as the project progresses.

Specific objectives include:



- Identifying Stakeholders
- Identifying and defining Project Working Groups (Project Study Group and Community Advisory Group)
- Identifying roles and responsibilities of lead agency
- Setting ground rules for participation
- Establishing timing and type of coordination efforts with stakeholders
- Establishing stakeholder requirements for providing timely input to the project development process

2.2 Stakeholder Identification Process

A stakeholder is anyone who could be affected by the project and has a stake in its outcome. This includes the Department, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), property owners, business owners, State and local officials, special interest groups including environmental, historic, cultural and economic resources, and motorists who utilize the facility. The identification of stakeholders for the IL 53 Study has begun as a combination of input from local community leaders and agencies.

Stakeholders for this project may include, but not limited to:

- Residents
- Business owners
- Institutions (churches, schools, etc.)
- Special interest groups
- Elected/Community officials
- Government and regional planning agencies
- Transportation system users
- Chambers of commerce
- Others outside the area expressing interests in the project

2.3 Stakeholder Involvement Ground Rules

Stakeholder involvement will be conducted based on a set of ground rules that form the basis for the respectful interaction of all parties involved in this process. These ground rules are tentative, pending acceptance by stakeholders, and can be revised upon general agreement. Tentative ground rules include:

- Input from all participants is valued and considered.
- All participants must come to the process with an open mind and participate openly and honestly.
- All participants in the process must treat each other with respect and dignity.
- All participants understand that topics will not be revisited once the issues have been addressed and general understanding is reached.
- The project must progress at a reasonable pace, based on the original project schedule.
- All decisions made by the Department must be arrived at in a clear and transparent manner and the stakeholders should agree their inputs have been considered.



- Members of the media are welcome to attend the meetings as observers, not participants in the process.

3. Stakeholder Group Organization

The working groups for the project include a Project Study Group (PSG) and Community Advisory Group (CAG).

Each project group has a distinct inter-related advisory role in the project development process. Project working group members represent a cross-section of the diverse stakeholders for this project. Working groups are an important mechanism for obtaining input, provide multi-disciplinary advice, and ultimately help develop a solution for the project. In general, the role of project working groups will be to provide input to the Project Study Group as the project moves forward.

It is anticipated that the PSG, CAG, local officials meetings, interagency coordination, and public meetings will be sufficient for the NEPA planning needs of this project.

3.1 Project Study Group (PSG)

The PSG is an interdisciplinary technical team comprised of agencies that guide the overall Phase I Study. For the IL 53 Study, the PSG includes the Department and the FHWA. The Department and FHWA serve as the lead agencies and will make the final project decisions. The PSG has a primary responsibility for the project development process. The group will meet periodically throughout the project process to provide technical oversight and expertise in key areas including project process, agency procedures and standards, and technical approaches. The PSG has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the SIP, Department, and FHWA requirements.

Other responsibilities include:

- Expediting the project development process
- Identifying and resolving project development issues
- Promoting partnership with stakeholders to address identified project needs
- Acquire clearance and approval of resource agencies

PSG member agencies for the IL 53 Study are listed in Appendix B. As all working groups, it is subject to modification during the process.

3.2 Community Advisory Group (CAG)

A key element of this stakeholder plan will be the creation of a CAG. The CAG is a collection of community representatives and serves as the focal point for the exchange of information between government entities and the local community. The CAG is made up of representatives of diverse community interests, local government officials, community representatives, property owners and residents, and stakeholders with technical expertise. The CAG assists the Department in making better decisions on transportation related projects that benefit the community and environment.



Selection of CAG members will occur in a fair and transparent manner. CAG applications will be available at the first public meeting and due December 1, 2015. Members will be selected based upon who they represent with the goal being an even distribution from each interest area. Potential CAG members are identified in Appendix C. The CAG will be refined during initial coordination with the Department, resource agencies, and PSG official meetings. The CAG works in close coordination with the project team and the PSG to ensure identified solutions balance both the community and technical needs.

Responsibilities of the CAG include:

- Attend all meetings or designate a representative
- Actively participate in meetings and provide information on community context
- Collaborate with the Department in decision making
- Support the Project Study Group (PSG)
- Share information with community members

CAG members must honorably represent community views and opinions.

3.3 Stakeholder Involvement

Any stakeholder who shows interest in the project will be added to the stakeholders list, ensuring that they will receive newsletters, meeting invitations, and projects updates.

3.4 Implementation

Public involvement begins as soon as the study starts and continues through construction. The SIP serves as a guide for public involvement in Phase I of this project, but includes strategies that can be used throughout all phases, including construction. Implementation of this plan requires the commitment and efforts of all involved parties. The PSG will be responsible for the overall development, implementation and coordination of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan. The PSG will meet with stakeholder groups on a one-on-one basis throughout the project if necessary. Stakeholders will be informed about project website where they can access information and submit comments.

3.5 Dispute Resolution

The Department is committed to working with all agencies and stakeholders in the study process to identify issues early and seek general understanding on both agreements and disagreements. The Department is committed to building stakeholder general agreement for decisions. However, if an impasse has been reached after making good faith efforts to address unresolved concerns, the Department may proceed to the next stage of the project development without achieving general agreement. In the case of an unresolved dispute between the agencies, the Department will notify stakeholders of their decision and proposed course of action.

The Department maintains the final word. The Department is the agency responsible for the safety and integrity of the state highway system and local agency routes built or improve with state or federal funds. As such, there will be considerations which cannot be compromised. There will be many different



stakeholders, such as local elected officials, environmentalists, other agencies, special interest groups, property owners and the general public, for each project; each will have differing views and interests. Although conflict resolution is a tool to resolve these differences, the Department is held ultimately responsible and therefore, makes the final decision.

4. Elected Officials and Agency Coordination

The goal of agency outreach and involvement is to ensure early and ongoing coordination with affected stakeholders and agencies regarding project issues and decision-making. The PSG will correspond with elected officials of the affected communities at scheduled milestones through the project. Additional correspondence and meetings will be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

5. Schedule of Project Development Activities/Stakeholder Involvement

This section describes the general project development process, project activities, and associated stakeholder involvement activities. An illustration of the general project development process, project activities, and anticipated stakeholder involvement activities can be found below. Since the SIP by its nature is a work in progress, the events and tasks described are subject to revision.



5.1 Public Meeting #1

The first public meeting is anticipated to occur in the fall of 2015. The purpose of the meeting is to obtain public input on the transportation issues in the study area, describe the project development



process, and provide information on additional public involvement opportunities. Exhibits will be on display and an audio-visual presentation will be shown continuously during the meeting. Project team members will be present to discuss the project and answer questions. Comment forms and CAG applications will be available at the meeting and on the project website.

5.2 CAG Meeting #1

The first CAG meeting is anticipated to occur in the winter of 2016. The meeting will include a presentation and workshop to explain the public involvement process, review the existing conditions, discuss transportation issues within the project study limits, and describe the evaluation criteria, design constraints, evaluation process, and the current range of improvements.

5.3 CAG Meeting #2

The second CAG meeting is anticipated to occur in the fall of 2016. The meeting will include a presentation and workshop to review the identified transportation issues and range of improvements, explain the completed screening and evaluation, and review the potential improvements that will be presented at the second public meeting.

5.4 Public Meeting #2

The second public meeting is anticipated to occur in the winter of 2017. The purpose of the meeting is to review the identified transportation issues and range of improvements, explain the completed screening and evaluation, and describe the potential improvements. Exhibits will be on display and an audio-visual presentation will be shown continuously during the meeting. Project team members will be present to discuss the project and answer questions.

5.5 CAG Meeting #3

The third CAG meeting is anticipated to occur in the spring of 2017. The meeting will include a presentation to review previous meetings and describe the preferred improvements.

5.6 Public Hearing

The public hearing is anticipated to occur in the spring of 2017. The purpose of the hearing is to review the study process and selection of the preferred alternative, and describe the preferred improvements and next steps. Exhibits will be on display and an audio-visual presentation will be shown continuously during the meeting. Project team members will be present to discuss the project and answer questions. Comment forms will be available at the meeting and on the project website. A public forum will be held to allow attendees to make a statement to a court reporter.



6. Stakeholder Involvement Plan Activities

The following public involvement activities are proposed for the IL 53 Study. Unless otherwise noted, the PSG is the responsible party for activities and coordination, and all activities will be approved by the Department before proceeding.

6.1 Stakeholder Groups

A stakeholder is anyone who could be affected by the project and has a stake in its outcome. For the IL 53 Study, there are two key groups of stakeholders identified: those with decision making capabilities related to implementation of transportation investments; and those with public standing who speak for the general public.

- Local, regional, state, and federal elected/appointed officials; and, agency representatives with jurisdiction over the transportation planning process, that are affected with environmental, historic, cultural, and economic resources.
- Residents, corridor businesses, professional associations, and local, regional, and potentially statewide community, civic, and environmental organizations.

6.2 Public Outreach Meetings

Public outreach is an essential part of the planning and design phases. Through public outreach, the team must identify challenges and work with key stakeholders, regional and local travelers on identifying their concerns and issues, while ultimately providing a safe, cost-effective transportation system that will enhance quality of life, promote economic prosperity, and demonstrate respect for our environment.

From the project initiation through completion, various correspondence and meetings will be held throughout the project development process to provide outreach opportunities to all stakeholders. Additional correspondence and meeting opportunities are listed below.

6.2.1 Agency Coordination

The preparation of the Categorical Exclusion (CE) requires compliance with local, state, and federal rules, regulations, and laws. In order to ensure compliance, coordination with FHWA and IDOT-BDE will occur throughout the study process.

6.2.2 Community Advisory Group Meetings

The community advisory group is anticipated to meet three (3) times over the course of the study. The meetings will be held during business hours and may be either morning or afternoon sessions.

6.2.3 Project Study Group Meetings

The PSG will meet as required over the course of the study. PSG meetings are held in coordination with standing FHWA coordination meetings.



6.2.4 Public Meetings/Hearing

Public involvement will include opportunities for broader public meetings in the form of public information meetings. These large-scale meetings will encourage public attendance and foster public awareness of project developments and improvements that are being evaluated. These meetings also will provide a forum for general public input, including concerns and comments regarding project improvements. Two public meetings and one public hearing are anticipated to coincide with major project milestones.

The meetings will utilize various public communication techniques such as project boards, handouts, and audio-visual presentations summarizing the project work and findings to date. The meetings will be advertised as public notices placed in area newspapers. Opportunities for the public to provide written comments will be available via comment forms (at the meetings), the project website (www.IL53Corridor.org), and the project e-mail (IL53Corridor@clarkdietz.com).

6.3 Other Mechanisms for Public Involvement

In addition to meetings described in the preceding section, there will be several other methods for the public to obtain and provide information about the project.

6.3.1 Project Mailing List

The stakeholder Project Mailing list is a document that will be created and maintained throughout the project. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be added to (or removed from) the mailing list as available or requested. The initial mailing list will include property owners, federal, state, and local officials, special interest groups, agencies, business and business leaders, and members of the public. The list will be developed initially using existing resources (assessor data, names and addresses of officials from other recent projects in the area, etc.), and will be updated throughout the project via ongoing outreach, sign-in-sheets, project website, and other methods. It is anticipated that new stakeholders will be added (or removed from) to the initial stakeholders list through the project.

6.3.2 Project Website

In an effort to utilize electronic resources, disseminate information to the public and to receive input and comments, a public website will be developed. This website will provide a centralized source of information, available to anyone with access to the internet at any time.

To maintain project identity and facilitate access to project information, this website will be in addition to the Department's website, with links between the two. Information posted on the website will include project history, study process and information, maps, photos, reports, and electronic versions of printed collateral. The website will also allow for two-way communication (comment forms), through the use of e-mail. For consistency, the website will be updated on the same schedule as the study's major milestones.

Website Domain: www.IL53Corridor.org



6.3.3 Media Outreach

Newspaper advertisements for the public meetings and hearing will be approximately three weeks and one week prior to the event. Press releases will also be prepared and reviewed through the Department prior to each public meeting. Announcements will be posted on the Department's and local community websites, and when possible, they may also be included on local public access television channels or news broadcasts. A crucial focus of the medial relations support strategy is to provide accurate information on the project and study process in addition to ensuring awareness of the public input opportunities.

6.3.4 Public Response and Communication

The project team will document all stakeholder comments and responses throughout the project. Comments will come as e-mail (direct link from website), standard mail, phone calls, and comment forms from meetings. The project mailing list will be continually updated for individuals who request to be added to the distribution list.

7. Plan Availability and Monitoring/Updates

The SIP is a dynamic document that will be available to stakeholders and updated as appropriate through the duration of the project. This sections describes the SIP stakeholder review opportunities and plan update procedures.

7.1 Availability of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan

The SIP will be available to stakeholders for review at public meetings and on the project website. The stakeholder review period for the SIP will be 21 days from the date of release. As the project proceeds forward, the SIP will be updated to reflect appropriate changes or conditions.

7.2 Modification of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan

The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis for effectiveness and will be updated as appropriate. The SIP may be updated as the project moves forward. Plan administration includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Maintaining a current list of project stakeholders
- Ensuring two-way communication and timely responses to stakeholders through formal and informal channels

Revisions to this SIP may be necessary through all phases of the project. The PSG will provide updated versions of the SIP to all agencies involved, as necessary. Plan updates will be tracked in Appendix D.



Appendix

Appendix A: Project Location Map





Appendix B: Project Study Group (PSG) (Tentative)

Organization
Illinois Department of Transportation - District 1
Illinois Department of Transportation - Central Office
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

DRAFT



Appendix D: SIP Revision History

Version	Date	Document Name	Description
1	October 2015	Stakeholder Involvement Plan	First Draft

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Appendix E: Acronyms List

ADT: Average Daily Traffic
BDE: Bureau of Design and Environment
CAG: Community Advisory Group
CE: Categorical Exclusion
CMAP: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
CSS: Context Sensitive Solutions
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
IDOT: Illinois Department of Transportation (Department)
IEPA: Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
NEPA: National Environmental Protection Agency
PSG: Project Study Group
SHSP: Strategic Highway Safety Plan
SIP: Stakeholder Involvement Plan

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Appendix F: Glossary

Categorical Exclusion (CE) – A classification given to federal aid projects or actions that do not have a significant effect on the environment either individually or cumulatively; and for which neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required. Categorical Exclusions do not require extensive levels of environmental documentation.

Categorical Exclusion II (CE II) – A type of a Categorical Exclusion where actions might have the potential to involve unusual circumstances. Examples of unusual circumstances include but are not limited to:

- Significant environmental impacts
- Substantial controversy on environmental grounds
- Significant impact on properties protected by Section 4(f) of the DOT Act or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local law, requirement or administrative determination relating to the environmental aspects of the action

Community Advisory Group (CAG) – A group made up of community representatives and serves as the focal point for the exchange of information between government entities and the local community. It is made up of representatives of diverse community interests; local government officials, community representatives, property owners and residents, and stakeholders with technical expertise. It assists the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in making better decisions on transportation related projects that benefit the community and environment.

Context – The interrelated condition in which something exists.

Context Sensitive Solutions – Balance between mobility, community needs and the environment while developing transportation projects. This is achieved through involving stakeholders early and continuously, addressing all modes of transportation, applying flexibility in the design, and incorporating aesthetics to the overall project.

Facilitation – A process in which a neutral guide (a facilitator) works collaboratively with a group to accomplish a specific task or reach a certain goal, without making substantive comments or providing input.

General Understanding or Agreement – A general understanding or agreement has been reached when the stakeholders agree that its input has been heard and duly considered and that the process as a whole was fair.

National Environmental Policy Act – The federal law that requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Environmental Assessment (EA), or Categorical Exclusion (CE) for undertakings using federal funds that may have significant impacts. To comply with NEPA, a process has been developed by the Department to address all potential environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of a proposed highway project before decisions are reached on design. Public involvement is an integral component of the NEPA process.



Multi-Modal Transportation – Includes all modes of transportation for a complete transportation system. Examples: cars, trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, high occupancy vehicles, mass transit, rail.

Open House – An informal, unstructured public meeting during which display boards are used to convey important project information and Department and consultant personnel are available to answer the public's questions.

Project Study Group – a group of professionals representing specific technical or scientific disciplines who are brought together for designated period of time to perform detailed analysis of subjects that require various environmental, engineering and project development expertise.

Public Hearing – The official method for gathering public comments on a project improvements and environmental impact statements. The format of the Hearing may be formal or informal and the purpose is to afford the public the fullest opportunity to express support or opposition relevant to a transportation project in an open forum. A verbatim record of the proceedings is kept.

Public Involvement – Coordination events and informational materials geared at encouraging the public to participate in the project development process. A successful Public Involvement Plan facilitates the exchange of information among project sponsors and outside groups and the general public, and includes meetings.

Stakeholder – Stakeholders for a project include any person or organization which has a direct stake in the project being considered.

Stakeholder Involvement – A process that will facilitate effective identification and understanding of the Plan (SIP) concerns and values of all stakeholders as an integral part of the project development process. It includes a formal written plan explaining how public input and comments will be obtained.

Study Area – The geographic area within which pertinent project matters are contained. Originally defined at the outset of engineering and environmental evaluation, although it may be revised during development of the studies and the CE II.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) – Community Interests – A group of residents, businesses, community leaders, and advocacy groups representing the population of the study area who assist in formulating transportation planning goals and objectives, evaluating improvement plans, selecting recommended courses of action and setting priorities. They represent community interests and contribute valuable information to project sponsors about the location, design, and implementation of proposed transportation improvements.