



# **Illinois 53 Phase I Study**

## **Public Comment Responses**

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

**March 21, 2024**

**4:00 - 7:00p.m.**

**Stone City VFW**

**Joliet, IL**

**Will County**



Illinois Department of Transportation



## Comment Summary

Stakeholders had multiple ways to provide official comments during the public hearing comment period:

- Comments sent to IDOT via letter, email message, or website
- Comment forms
- Testimony to court reporter during the open house and public forum

A total of 65 official comments were received during the comment period. Stakeholders could also discuss comments with the project team as well as write post-it note comments on the aerial maps. All these comments have been summarized into the following categories:

### 1. US 52 Improvements

The existing intersection of IL 53 at Doris Avenue (US 52) has experienced high rates of crashes due to the lack of a southbound left turn lane on IL 53. The existing intersection of US 52 at Mills Road has experienced crashes related to the intersection skew and poor sight lines. The Department performed traffic, safety, and geometric analyses at both intersections to identify designs that address the existing deficiencies while minimizing impacts to existing infrastructure and the surrounding environment.

After analysis and coordination with local stakeholders, the City of Joliet, Will County, and the Joliet Park District, the preferred alternative includes relocating US 52 from Doris Avenue to Mills Road, removing the existing traffic signal at IL 53 and Doris Avenue, and converting Doris Avenue to a cul-de-sac. The preferred alternative removes the existing southbound left turning movement at the intersection of IL 53 and Doris Avenue and relocates this movement to the intersection of IL 53 at Mills Road where it can be accommodated in a safe manner with an adequately sized left turn lane. The preferred alternative also includes converting the intersection of US 52 at Mills Road to a roundabout that can accommodate trucks and closing Nowell Avenue at Mills Road. This will reduce turning movement conflicts and provide unobstructed sight lines for drivers.

The Department recognizes that removing access between IL 53 and Doris Avenue may have indirect impacts to existing travel patterns for local businesses, residents, and patrons of Nowell Park. The Department is currently coordinating with the City of Joliet, Will County, and the Joliet Park District to refine these proposed improvements and identify ways to minimize impacts to the surrounding community. Additionally, the proposed improvements are contingent upon the relocation of US 52, which will be coordinated during Phase II design.

## 2. Safety and Traffic Concerns at Intersections

As part of the IL 53 Phase I Study, the Department performed traffic capacity and safety analyses along the IL 53 corridor from River Road to Patterson Road, including all intersections within those limits. The results of these analyses were used to develop the proposed improvements as presented at the public hearing. At the public hearing, the Department received comments that traffic patterns and volumes have changed since the development of the proposed improvements and additional analysis is needed at the following intersections:

### IL 53 at Millsdale Road and IL 53 at Mississippi Avenue

Multiple comments were received requesting the installation of traffic signals at these two intersections. Installation of a traffic signal must be justified based on an engineering study of traffic conditions, pedestrian characteristics, and physical characteristics of a location. For a traffic signal to be installed, at least one of the nine warrants described in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) must be met. In Illinois, roadways that are designated as Strategic Regional Arterials (SRAs), such as IL 53 designated as SRA 512, have further restrictions to the use of traffic control devices. The Department conducted traffic signal warrant analyses at the intersections of IL 53 at Millsdale Road and IL 53 at Mississippi Avenue during the Phase I study process and neither intersection warranted a traffic signal.

After the public hearing, the Department conducted traffic counts at both intersections and performed traffic signal warrant analyses with this new traffic data. Neither intersection warrants a traffic signal with the new traffic data. The Department also updated the traffic capacity and safety analyses to identify existing deficiencies and determine if additional geometrics improvements are needed. Based on these analyses, no additional geometric improvements are being recommended.

### IL 53 at Manhattan Road

Comments were received requesting the addition of turn lanes on Manhattan Road and adjustments to signal timing and phasing to improve traffic operations on Manhattan Road. The Department has conducted new traffic counts at this intersection and performed a traffic capacity analysis to identify existing capacity deficiencies. Based on this analysis, the Department is proposing to add eastbound and westbound left turn lanes on Manhattan Road and optimize the signal timing. These proposed improvements are consistent with planned improvements by the Will County Division of Transportation.

### 3. IL 53 Pavement Conditions

The Department received multiple comments identifying sections of IL 53 with poor or deteriorating pavement conditions. The following summarizes these sections and identifies the Department's current plans to address the pavement condition:

#### Patterson Road to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

This section of pavement is outside of the IL 53 Phase I Study limits; however, this pavement will be reconstructed as part of the I-80 reconstruction project that is currently underway.

#### Doris Avenue to Patterson Road

As part of the IL 53 Phase I Study, this section of pavement is proposed to be reconstructed along with the existing retaining walls and sidewalk.

#### Arsenal Road to Hoff Road

While this section is located within the study limits of the IL 53 Phase I Study, the Department is currently preparing to perform patching along this section and will continue to monitor the condition of the pavement.

### 4. Truck Traffic and Development along IL 53

This section of IL 53 is currently designated a Class II Truck Route, which is a non-interstate roadway with a minimum lane width of 11 feet. It has the same vehicle weight and size restrictions of a Class I Truck Route specified in the Illinois Vehicle Code. Illinois enacted new truck weight laws on January 1, 2010. Prior to January 1, 2010, local governments designated roadways as Class II Truck Routes to allow trucks with higher weights into industrial and commercial transportation areas. After January 1, 2010, the local Class II Truck Route designation provides longer trucks a lawful way to access the same destinations.

In 1994, IL 53 from Peotone Road to Interstate 80 was designated as a 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 Department completed SRA Report 512. This report 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. The Will County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan also identifies improvements to the regional roadway network that are needed to address the increase in truck and freight traffic associated with new

warehouse developments. Links to these various reports and studies are available on the project website [www.il53corridor.org/links/](http://www.il53corridor.org/links/)

## 5. Drainage Deficiencies at Various Locations

A Location Drainage Study (LDS) is being performed as part of the IL 53 Phase I Study. This LDS analyzes existing drainage patterns and identifies deficiencies that need to be addressed with the proposed improvements. Based on the Department's analysis and additional feedback from stakeholders, improvements to the existing ditches and culverts are needed to address flooding issues along IL 53 near Sugar Run Creek, Jackson Creek, and Cedar Creek, along US 52, and at the intersection of IL 53 at Laraway Road. The proposed drainage improvements, which may include ditch regrading, replacement of existing culverts, or the addition of new storm sewer, will be included in the Proposed Drainage Plan (PDP), and discussed in the LDS.

## 6. Roadway Lighting Along IL 53 North of Laraway Road

As part of the IL 53 Phase I Study, the Department conducted a lighting assessment along IL 53 from River Road to Patterson Road. The lighting assessment determined that roadway lighting is warranted/recommended along IL 53 between Laraway Road and Patterson Road. These lighting recommendations will be documented in the IL 53 Phase I Study project report and will be used to develop the Phase II design plans. The proposed lighting improvements are contingent upon local cost and maintenance participation.

## 7. Speed Limit Enforcement along IL 53

Speed limits on Illinois state highways are a matter of state law. They have been established by the Illinois Vehicle Code and the Department's Policy on Establishing and Posting Speed Limits on the State Highway System. The current statutory speed limit on IL 53 ranges from 55 mph at the south end of the project limits to 40 mph at the north end of the project limits.

The Department has statutory responsibility for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of Illinois' extensive transportation network, while local law enforcement agencies are responsible for enforcing the traffic laws within their jurisdiction.