



U.S. 30 Corridor Study: Moving Forward

Since our last newsletter, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Project Study Team have continued their efforts to develop the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for improvements to the U.S. 30 Corridor in Whiteside County. This work has involved numerous meetings with stakeholders including public officials and property owners, and such work will continue over the coming months.

Our last newsletter provided an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the six alternative alignments. The Project Study Team considered these comments as they evaluated the social and environmental impacts of these alternative alignments. The goal of this process was to determine which alternatives would best serve the public while meeting the Purpose and Need Statement for the project: to improve traffic capacity and safety, reduce traffic congestion, provide for an anticipated increase in transportation demand, and establish roadway continuity.

The documentation of this process is included within the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which was completed and signed by IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in April 2011. The DEIS provides a thorough evaluation of the six alternative alignments in accordance with federal and state requirements. The DEIS specified that Build Alternatives 4 (northern) and 5 (southern), as well as the No-Build Alternative, will be studied further. This document was presented at the public hearing held in June 2011 where stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on the DEIS, Build Alternatives 4 and 5, and the No-Build Alternative.

Following the June 2011 Public Hearing, further evaluation of the Build Alternatives became necessary as a result of statewide floodplain modernization efforts including the area of French Creek. Subsequently, IDOT determined that the affected alternatives would require modifications. As a result, a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) will be required as an additional step within the EIS process. You will find additional updates about the SDEIS and the revised Build Alternatives in this newsletter.

Your input is important to us! If you have questions or comments about the U.S. 30 Corridor Study, you can contact us through the project hotline at 1-866-ROUTE30 (1-866-768-8330). We also encourage you to visit the website, www.dot.il.gov/us30/index1.html, to learn more about the project as it progresses.

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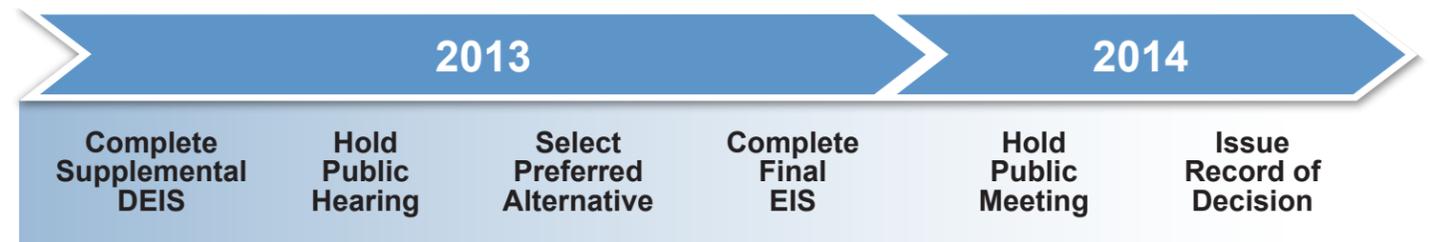
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U.S. 30 Corridor Study Keeping the Community Informed Read More...

Next Steps



U.S. 30 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Public Hearing

On June 15, 2011, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) hosted a public hearing for the U.S. 30 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) at the United Methodist Church in Morrison, Illinois. The purpose of the hearing was to afford the public with an opportunity to view and comment on the DEIS document, to discuss their concerns regarding the project with the study team, and to provide comments on the two proposed Build Alternatives as well as the No-Build Alternative. Over 200 people signed in at the hearing and approximately 77 percent of the attendees indicated they were residents of the city of Morrison.

As part of the DEIS review process, respondents were given an opportunity to provide comments at the public hearing, or to submit comments via web or postal mail. A total of 88 comments were acquired prior to the published review period end date of July 29, 2011.

The most common concerns of stakeholders were farmland preservation, highway safety, economic development, and funding for the project. Also of interest were impacts to businesses, property, and the environment.

Build Alternative 4 (northern) received limited support from those who provided comments. Build Alternative 5 (southern)

Revised Build Alternatives

In 2011, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) completed its Floodplain Insurance Study of Whiteside County. The results of this study included revised mapping of the 100-year floodplains within the U.S. 30 project study area. The most considerable revision within the U.S. 30 project study area was the expansion of the floodplain associated with French Creek, which is located outside of the eastern city limits of Morrison.

As a result of this expansion of the French Creek floodplain, a significant increase in floodplain impacts became evident within the limits of Build Alternative 5 (southern). These direct impacts were one area of concern, but future planning along the proposed route was an additional potential issue. According to Federal Executive Order 11988, titled Floodplain Management, federal agencies are required to consider indirect impacts on floodplains, such as the effect that an alternative's location would have on future opportunities for development. Consequently, it was necessary to investigate a partial realignment that would avoid impacts to the French Creek floodplain in order to allow continued consideration of Build Alternative 5. The Federal Highway Administration and IDOT subsequently determined that it would be feasible to realign Build Alternative 5 outside of the French Creek floodplain while retaining the basic nature of the original alignment.

The section of Build Alternative 5 that was realigned extends from west of Sawyer Road to immediately east of Lyndon Road. The revised section of this alternative is approximately one mile southeast from the original Build Alternative 5.

was primarily favored by business owners, developers, special interest groups, and the surrounding municipalities. The No-Build Alternative was preferred by homeowners, farmers/farmland owners and residents of Morrison.

To view the complete Public Hearing Record Report, please visit the project website at www.dot.il.gov/us30/getinvolved4.html.



Stakeholders review Public Hearing map display

This realignment allows for complete avoidance of the French Creek floodplain. The modification begins just west of Illinois Route 78 to allow the alternative to avoid the southern tip of the French Creek floodplain. This realignment has reduced the overall floodplain impacts of Build Alternative 5 by approximately 16,000 linear feet.

Additional adjustments were made to Build Alternative 4 (northern) which was modified slightly east to avoid the revised French Creek floodplain in the area west of Lyndon Road. This revision was enacted in order to follow the Floodplain Management Executive Order by minimizing the floodplain impacts for Build Alternative 4.

The realignment of Build Alternatives 4 and 5 not only reduced the floodplain impacts but also reduced the number of residential and farmstead displacements. The overall environmental and property impacts of revised Build Alternatives 4 and 5 will be assessed in greater detail as the preliminary engineering study for the project progresses.

The west and east ends of Build Alternative 4 and Build Alternative 5 are unchanged from the alignments presented at the June 2011 Public Hearing. The alignment modifications and their associated impacts will be evaluated and documented in a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which will be available for public review and comment in 2013. A map illustrating the Build Alternatives is included as an insert in this newsletter, or can be viewed on the project website at www.dot.state.il.us/us30/maps.html.

Community Advisory Group Meeting

On Tuesday, May 8, 2012, IDOT hosted the eighth Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting at the United Methodist Church in Morrison. The purpose of the meeting was to update the members on the progress of the U.S. 30 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

During the meeting CAG members were provided with the results of the public hearing and an explanation of the statewide floodplain map modernization. Also discussed was the need to revise the Build Alternatives and the next steps in the EIS process.

An open discussion followed the presentation of this information in order to address the comments and concerns of those in attendance. Questions discussed include the following:

Q: Is the time, effort and expense involved in revising the alternatives necessary?

A: The department was prepared to submit the project to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in order to secure their concurrence on a preferred alternative following the 2011 Public Hearing. However, the FHWA would not allow Build Alternative 5 (southern) to be considered as a viable option due to its impact to the newly delineated floodplains leaving Build Alternative 4 (northern) as the only viable alternative. The department has not yet determined which alternative will be recommended for further development in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. It is necessary to complete additional analysis before a preferred alternative can be identified by IDOT and FHWA.

Whiteside County Engineer and Township Supervisors Meeting

In a continued effort to coordinate with the many stakeholders throughout the corridor, representatives of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the consultant team met on May 22, 2012 with the Whiteside County Engineer and the supervisors of Fulton, Hopkins, Union Grove, and Ustick townships. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the current alignments for Build Alternatives 4 and 5 as well as how each alignment would affect access for the various side roads crossed.

The discussion began with an explanation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) changes to the floodplain limits and the resulting need to revise the alignments of Build Alternatives 4 and 5. The basic criteria for the proposed expressway were also described. These criteria include use of a 70 mph design speed, elimination of direct commercial access to the expressway, minimized direct access for residential or agricultural purposes, and average spacing of one mile or more for public side road connections throughout the corridor.

IDOT representatives explained that it is not possible to provide direct access from every side road crossed by the proposed

Q: Does the new schedule still allow for selection of a preferred alternative in 2012?

A: No, the expectation is that a public hearing will be held in mid 2013 with the selection of a preferred alternative following shortly thereafter.

Q. What will be the deciding factor in selecting a preferred alternative?

A. There are many factors including public opinion, environmental impacts, engineering constraints, and cost. Input provided by FHWA and other regulating agencies is also a significant factor as we determine the preferred alternate. These factors will be analyzed and presented to the CAG group and stakeholders at the final public hearing in mid 2013.

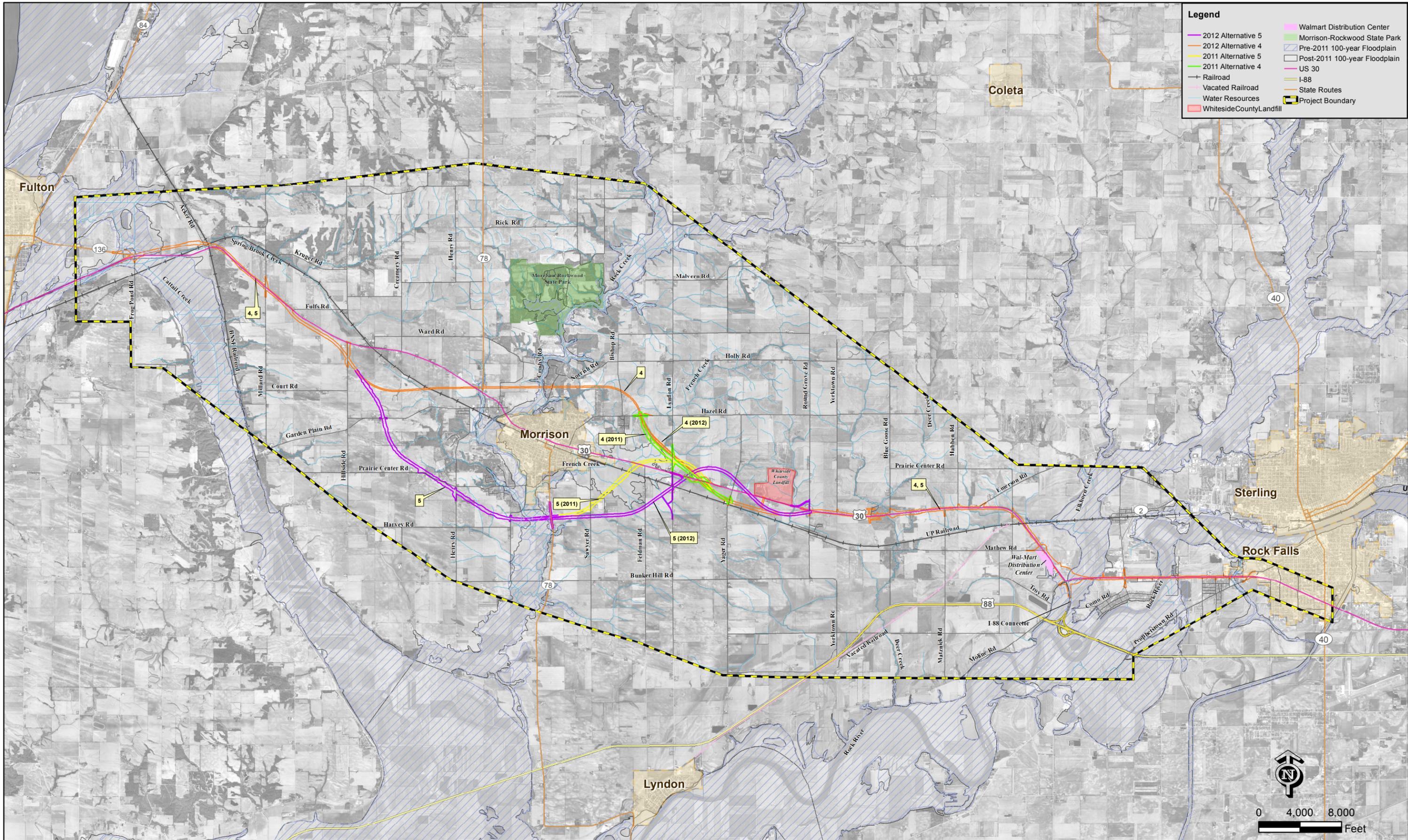
The attendees were informed that a CAG meeting will be held to discuss the alternatives following the public hearing in 2013. Input from CAG members and the public will be considered in conjunction with a thorough engineering analysis of the alternatives. Following the completion of this analysis a preferred alternative will be selected by the Project Study Group. Subsequently, the Final Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared and submitted for review and comment. The department anticipates that the last milestone for the Phase I process, the Record of Decision, will be completed in 2014.

To view the meeting minutes and presentation, please visit the project website at www.dot.il.gov/us30/getinvolved2.html.

expressway as a result of the side road spacing policy. The design team identified side roads with projected traffic volumes of more than 300 vehicles per day in order to prioritize which routes would be afforded direct access to the proposed expressway. A summarization of side roads identified to be terminated short of the expressway with a cul-de-sac or to be grade-separated without access were discussed with the county engineer and township supervisors for their consideration and comments.

Input on the proposed access plan as well as any other pertinent issues was requested from the county and townships so that local concerns are known. The county engineer and township supervisors indicated they would provide the input once the matter has been given proper consideration and the other supervisors not in attendance were consulted. We are anticipating receipt of this input in the near future.

If you would like to view the minutes from the stakeholder meeting, please visit the project website at www.dot.il.gov/us30/getinvolved8.html.



Legend

- 2012 Alternative 5
- 2012 Alternative 4
- 2011 Alternative 5
- 2011 Alternative 4
- Railroad
- Vacated Railroad
- Water Resources
- Whiteside County Landfill
- Walmart Distribution Center
- Morrison-Rockwood State Park
- Pre-2011 100-year Floodplain
- Post-2011 100-year Floodplain
- US 30
- I-88
- State Routes
- Project Boundary

0 4,000 8,000 Feet



**Build Alternatives 4 and 5 (Summer 2012)
U.S. 30 Environmental Impact Statement
Whiteside County, Illinois**