

Alton-Godfrey

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Illinois Department of Transportation

Newsletter #3

Summer, 2015

Study Update

Since the study's second Public Informational Meeting on November 19, 2014, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and their consultant team partners (collectively, the "study team") have been busy on several key tasks to keep the study moving forward. The following study activities are discussed further in this Newsletter:

- Evaluating four study Alternatives Carried Forward (plus the No-Build alternative) to identify a Preferred Alternative
- Reviewing, considering and responding to comments received at the second public informational meeting
- Development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Preliminary engineering

The enclosed insert shows the Alternatives Carried Forward. This Newsletter also includes an overview of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations being considered as part of the study, information about future public involvement opportunities, and how you can provide your input to IDOT.

Identifying a Preferred Study Alternative

As shown on the graphic at right, the path to develop and identify a Preferred Alternative involves several steps. Throughout this process, feedback from residents, business owners, public officials and other stakeholders helps guide and inform IDOT in its decision-making by providing insight on the values and character of a community.

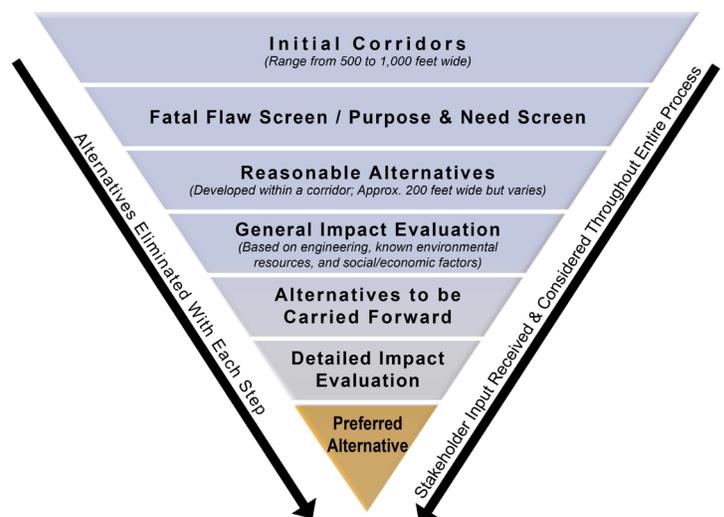
For the Alton-Godfrey Transportation Study, the study team developed initial broad conceptual corridors; assessed those corridors for feasibility and constructability; and developed 12 alternatives that represented reasonable roadway improvement options. A No-Build alternative, or the option of making no improvements, is also

evaluated throughout each step of this process.

Those 12 reasonable alternatives were then subjected to a general evaluation of engineering, socioeconomic and environmental criteria, resulting in four Alternatives to be Carried Forward (plus the No-Build alternative), which were presented at the November 2014 public meeting for public review and comment. These alternatives consisted of four north-south options, with an improvement at the Homer Adams Parkway/North Alby Street/Alton Square Mall commercial area common to all alternatives.

For the final step, identifying a Preferred Alternative, the study team evaluated the four Alternatives to be Carried Forward, and the No-Build alternative, against a more detailed set of criteria and with consideration of input received during and since the November 2014 public meeting. The potential Preferred Alternative will be presented for public review and comment at the third public meeting on July 15, 2015.

Information about the upcoming public meeting on July 15 can be found on page three of this newsletter.





Public Informational Meeting #2 Follow-Up

On November 19, 2014, IDOT hosted the study's second public informational meeting at Alton High School. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the public with an opportunity to view and comment on the study's progress; to discuss their concerns regarding the project with the study team; and to provide comments on the four alternatives proposed to be carried forward (and their associated impacts) and the No-Build alternative. Of the 114 people who signed in at the meeting, most indicated they were residents of Alton or Godfrey, or local business owners.

Subsequent to the public meeting, a total of 26 comments were received. Most comments expressed either a preference or dislike for specific alternatives that was dependent on: where they live or work; their general experience traveling in the area; or their perspective on how the alternatives would affect homes, businesses and natural features. Several comments stated that making improvements to Tolle Lane and elevating the current at-grade railroad crossing there and at North Alby Street would be beneficial to travel in



the area. This information was used to help the study team in its evaluation of the alternatives being considered. The information gathered also helped the study team make refinements to the alternatives where it was allowable and appropriate to do so.

The handouts and displays from the second public meeting can be viewed on the project website: www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/Alton-Godfrey-Study.

Community Advisory Group

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) is one of the public outreach tools utilized by IDOT to identify the views of the public and the issues that are important to the Alton and Godfrey communities. This feedback is used by the study team, along with the engineering and environmental evaluation, in order to develop and refine solutions that address the project's need. For this study, IDOT has been working with a group of approximately 25 individuals covering a broad cross-section of the Alton and Godfrey communities. These individuals include community leaders, residents, business owners, emergency responders, and representatives of other local organizations.

As of Summer 2015, six CAG meetings have taken place. Key activities at these meetings have included:

- Completion of Context Audit by each member, to help IDOT gain an understanding of community resources and values
- Development of the study's Problem Statement
- Discussion of CAG member perspectives on concepts and alternatives developed that address the project's purpose in the overall study area

Future CAG meetings will be scheduled as needed by the study team.

Problem Statement

Developed with input from the CAG, the Problem Statement summarizes the issues to be addressed by the study and serves as the backbone of the study's Purpose and Need.

"The transportation problems in the study area relate to traffic congestion, poor or mismanaged access and insufficient roadway continuity and connectivity, which contributes to delays and crashes. Traffic is often delayed by trains at the numerous at-grade rail crossings. These improvements need to consider the community's desire to preserve the character of the community, to enhance the safety of the public, to promote more pedestrian/bike facilities and to maximize the economic benefit of IL Route 255."



Environmental Impact Statement is Progressing

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that discusses the effects a major project has on the environment.

The EIS explores feasible alternatives to a proposed action and the likely environmental consequences of those actions. For this project, the EIS is investigating proposed transportation improvements that meet the purpose of the project, which is “to make improvements to the local roadway system, to improve continuity and connectivity between its major traffic destinations and IL Route 255, as well as to provide better connections between IL Route 3/111 and US Route 67.”

The EIS includes an in-depth inventory of environmental resources within the project area. These include wetlands, threatened and endangered species, noise, air quality, agriculture, displacements of homes and businesses, etc. As alternatives are developed to meet the project’s purpose, the project team evaluates ways to avoid or minimize impacts to these resources.

The EIS is accompanied by an engineering report, called a Design Report. The Design Report ensures the project is designed and constructed according to IDOT policies and criteria to ultimately craft the best possible solutions to the identified transportation needs.

The EIS for the Alton-Godfrey Connector is currently being drafted and is anticipated being available for public review and comment at a Public Hearing in late 2015, which is not yet scheduled. The Draft EIS will provide detailed information on the Purpose and Need for the project; environmental resources identified throughout the project study area; impacts of the alternatives on those resources; and public input. Once the Final EIS is developed, it will go to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval.

For more information on NEPA and the EIS for this project, please visit the project website at www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/Alton-Godfrey-Study.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations Being Considered

IDOT is considering bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along the proposed improved routes in accordance with the state’s Complete Streets legislation. The majority of the proposed accommodations for this project are separated shared-use paths due to the anticipated higher volume of traffic and higher speeds along these routes. A shared use path is physically separated from traffic by an open space or barrier. Providing the bike or pedestrian accommodation requires participation in the cost by a local agency (municipality, county, park district, etc.). If there is no local cost participation, the path will not be included, although some right of way may be provided for future use. IDOT is currently coordinating with local agencies to offer the opportunity to partner in providing these accommodations with this project.

Public Informational Meeting #3 – Scheduled for July 15, 2015

The study’s third public informational meeting will take place:

Wednesday, July 15, 2015
4:00 to 7:00 pm
Alton High School
4200 Humbert Road
Alton, Illinois

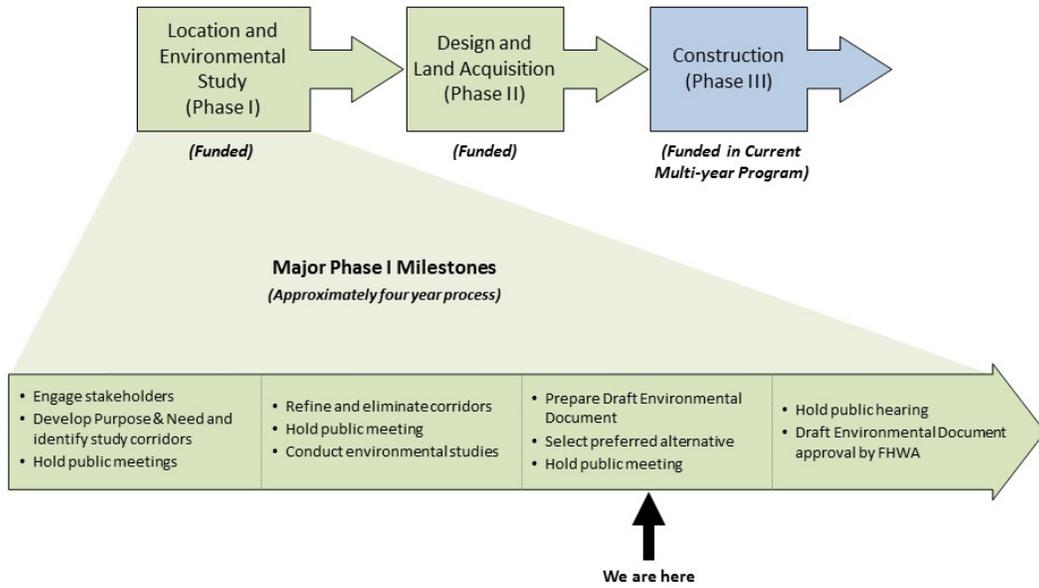
The purpose of the meeting will be to present the study’s potential Preferred Alternative, discuss the study with the public and provide an opportunity for comment and feedback. The meeting will be held in an open house format with no formal presentations.

IDOT encourages you to attend and discuss your questions or concerns with project study team members and provide your feedback about the project. Please visit the project website, www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/Alton-Godfrey-Study, for more project information.

What’s Next?

The following activities will take place over the next few months:

- Drainage studies, noise analysis and land surveying
- Identification of a Preferred Alternative
- Completion of the Draft Environmental Statement and submittal to the FHWA
- Public Hearing expected in late 2015 (not yet scheduled)
- Continue to engage the public and solicit comments and feedback



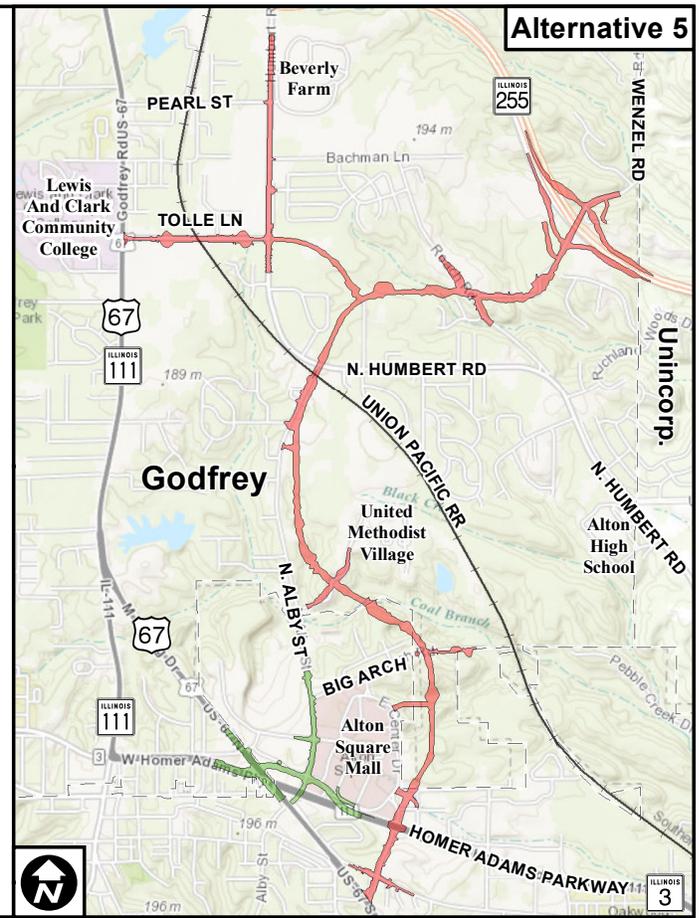
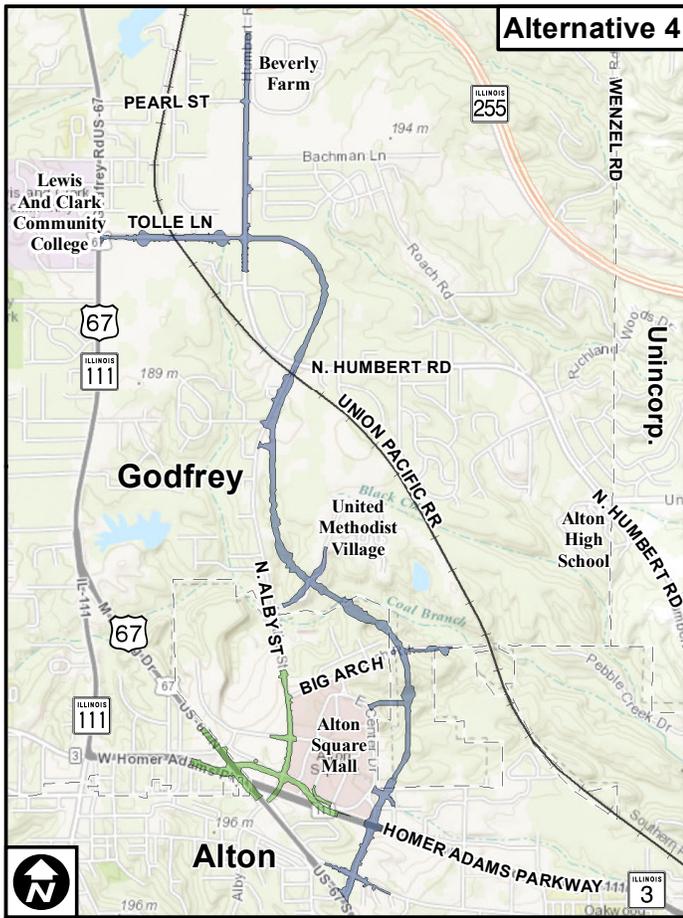
Have a question or need specific information?

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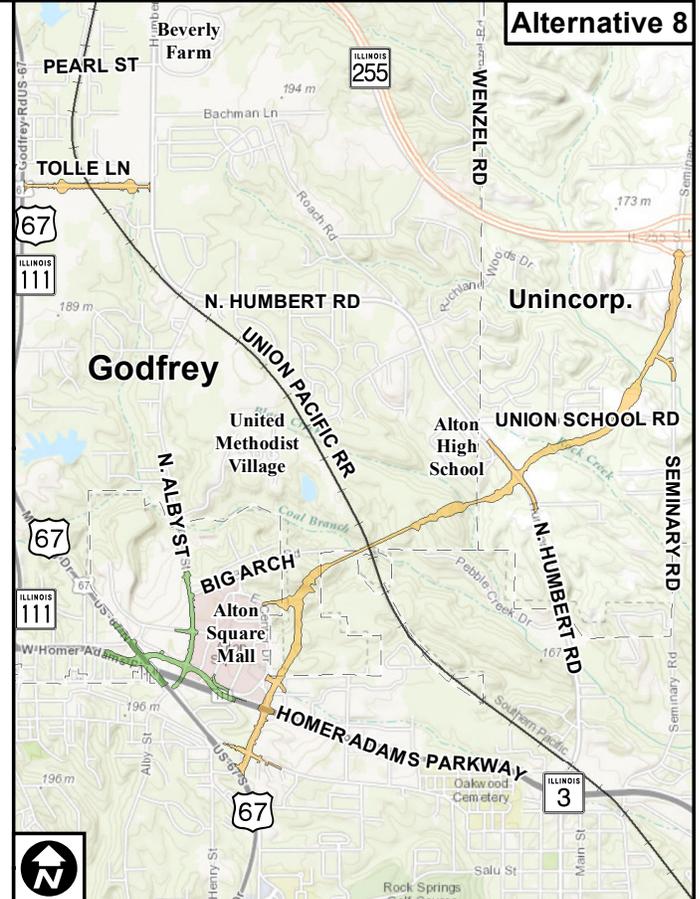
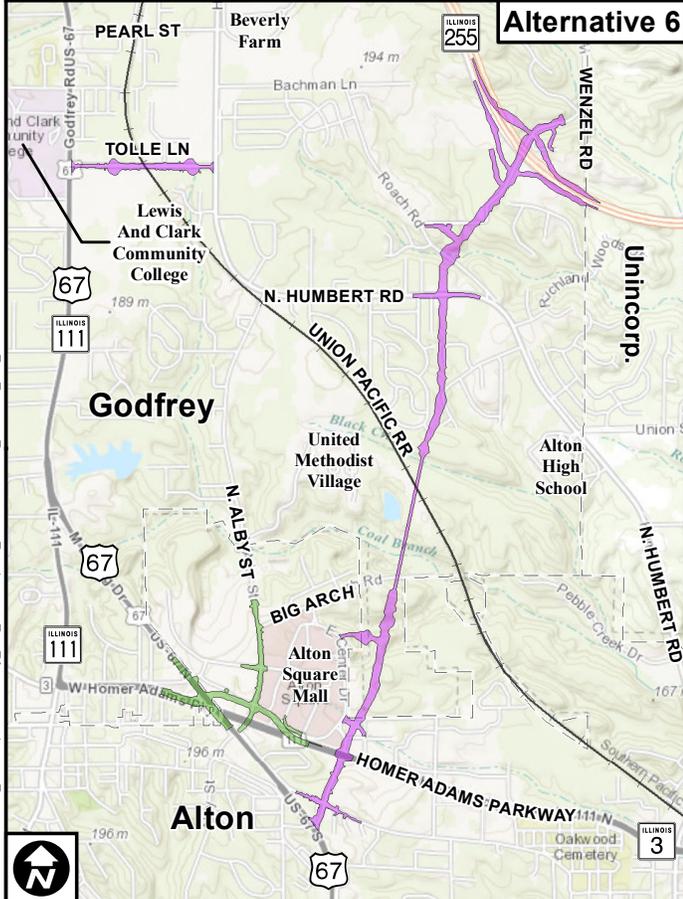
Get Involved and Stay Informed!

Visit our project website,
www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/Alton-Godfrey-Study,
 where you can:

- Get project updates
- Sign up for the mailing list to receive future newsletters
- Send your comments and questions to the study team



Alternative 4 Alternative 5 Alternative 6 Alternative 8 Alternative 12-3 Municipal Boundary



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