

SUMMARY

Illinois Route 31 Phase I Study:
Illinois Route 176 to Illinois Route 120
McHenry County

McHenry County College Shah Center
4100 W. Shamrock Lane
McHenry, Illinois 60050
Thursday, November 3, 2011
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #3

The purpose of the CAG meeting was to present a summary of CAG Meeting #1 and #2 where the project Problem Statement and project Purpose and Need were developed; introduce key findings in previous Route 31 study; introduce design alternatives for sections along the entire project; discuss regional development; and conduct a workshop to receive ideas for design improvements on both micro and macro levels (1"=50' scale plans and regional maps were provided).

Invited participants included stakeholders who signed up for the CAG or who have attended CAG Meeting #1 and #2. A total of 39 volunteers were invited to this CAG meeting.

This meeting was attended by **18** invited CAG members or other interested project stakeholders; and **9** members of the project study group were present to facilitate the meeting and answer any questions (See attached sign-in sheet).

The meeting began with a PowerPoint presentation, conducted by John Clark from STV Incorporated that included topics as noted below:

- **Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda**
 - Mr. Clark introduced the project team including IDOT, STV Incorporated, and Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. (CBBEL) and briefly explained their role on the project.
 - CAG and project team members introduced themselves – name, whom they represent (group and/or government agency), and/or which community they lived in.
 - All members were given a copy of the meeting agenda and a handout packet including a copy of the presentation and CAG Meeting #2 summary.
 - Mr. Clark gave an overview of the Agenda for CAG Meeting #3 which included an overview of the previous 2 CAG meetings, project problem statement, project Purpose and Need, Engineering Toolbox, and the planned Alternatives Workshop for CAG Meeting #3.
- **Summary of CAG Meeting #1 and #2**
 - The summary of CAG Meeting #2 was presented. Mr. Clark noted that CAG members developed the project problem statement in the first CAG meeting which helped to develop the project Purpose and Need statement for CAG Meeting #2. In addition, the CAG identified the Need statements at the 2nd meeting.
 - Design constraints, the Engineer's Toolbox, and the Project Constraints Identification Workshop were reviewed from the previous meeting. Mr. Clark noted that the major project constraints identified included Environmental, Cultural, and Social resources.

- **Problem Statement and Purpose and Need**

- The Project Problem statement was restated in its entirety: “The transportation problems along Illinois Route 31, from Illinois Route 176 to Illinois Route 120, to be solved by this project are: congestion (existing and future), safety for multi-modal users, accessibility for all users, and existing design deficiencies; in addition, minimize overall environmental impacts (e.g. storm water runoff and water quality).”
- An updated Project Purpose and Need statement was presented to the CAG members at CAG Meeting #3. This statement was revised to incorporate some CAG member input provided at CAG Meeting #2
 - The updated Project Purpose was presented as the following: *“The purpose of the proposed action is to address transportation safety, capacity, multi-modal transportation needs, and geometric deficiencies along Illinois Route 31 from the intersection of Illinois Route 176 to the intersection of Illinois Route 120, in eastern McHenry County.”*
 - The updated Project Need Statements were presented as the following: Improve Roadway Safety, Expand Roadway Capacity, Correct Existing Roadway Design Deficiencies, and Improve opportunities for multimodal connectivity. Mr. Clark discussed how the need to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians was revised to the need to improve opportunities for multimodal connectivity, as a result of the previous CAG meeting’s discussions.
 - A discussion from the CAG members began about an additional change to the Need statement that was requested at the previous CAG meeting. During CAG Meeting #2, it was requested by CAG members to add Access Management, or specifically “maintain full access to all properties along IL Route 31”, to the Project and Need statements.
 - The PSG discussed why the Purpose and Need statement was not revised to include Access Management. Access Management is a roadway safety improvement tool that implies the reduction and/or consolidation of access points along a highway to improve safety. It was understood that the term, “Access Management” did not apply to the concerns received from the CAG. One CAG member clarified this request to note that they wanted IDOT to “maintain full access to all properties along IL Route 31” and they wanted this statement to be included in the project Purpose and Need statement. Mr. Clark explained that the inclusion of this statement in the project Purpose and Need would be in direct conflict with the other stated Purpose and Need objectives, mainly safety. He noted that the workshop planned for this CAG meeting would be an excellent opportunity to take a look at specific areas of concern that CAG members may have to identify potential solutions that may satisfy both the project Purpose and Need and the request to maintain access from members of the CAG.
 - Steve Schilke (IDOT) noted that the request to “maintain full access to all properties along IL Route 31”, is not appropriate to include in a Purpose and Need statement or document per FHWA. Since this project receives federal funding, our statement must conform to FHWA guidelines. Illinois Route 31 is an SRA route. IDOT BDE design guidelines for improvements along SRA routes recommend

that the engineer implement access management techniques to improve mobility and safety along the SRA. These techniques include considering limiting local street access, consolidating driveway access points and converting existing driveways to “Right-In and Right-Out” only driveways. These access management techniques are to be included in the design, regardless of the median type (barrier or flush) selected. The PSG will follow guidelines to provide full access for all properties, although this access may not be exactly the same as it is for existing conditions. Each access will be studied and designed on a case to case basis, per IDOT BDE and FHWA guidelines.

- Questions were also raised by CAG members regarding the inclusion of the need to reduce environmental impacts and promote economic growth to the project Purpose and Need statements. The PSG discussed why these needs also cannot be added. Discussion included the following:
 - FHWA does not consider these needs to be appropriate for inclusion in the project Purpose and Need. Since this project receives federal funding, our statement must conform to FHWA regulations.
 - Economic growth was explained to the CAG members as a result of a direct need. For example, a traffic analysis for future traffic demands because of projected economic growth could be a form of demonstrating this need. This example is demonstrated in the current Purpose and Need statement in the form of improved capacity (or Mobility).
 - Environmental impact was not included because regardless of what is included in the project Purpose and Need statement, the environmental impacts are analyzed and minimized. Because this is required by law in the NEPA process, there is no need to incorporate this request into the Purpose and Need Statement.
- The group came to an understanding that the changes resulting in the updated Purpose and Need statement were appropriate; however, in order to capture access management in the form that better satisfied the CAG’s concerns was to change one of the Need statements from “Expand Roadway Capacity” to “Expand Roadway Mobility (Capacity and Accessibility).” The CAG also came to the understanding that their needs could be more specifically captured in the Alternatives Development workshop later in the meeting and throughout the Alternatives Development process.
- **Summary of The Engineering Toolbox, and The Previous Illinois Route 31 Study**
 - The Engineering Toolbox was reviewed. A brief description was provided regarding the design “tools” available to improve safety and mobility along a highway system.
 - Pedestrian / Bicyclist safety improvement tools include pedestrian crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian countdown signals, pedestrian pushbuttons, and multi-use paths.
 - Roadway safety improvement tools include raised medians, two-way left turn lanes, driveway improvements, access management, improved sight distance, horizontal curve realignment, and roadway lighting.

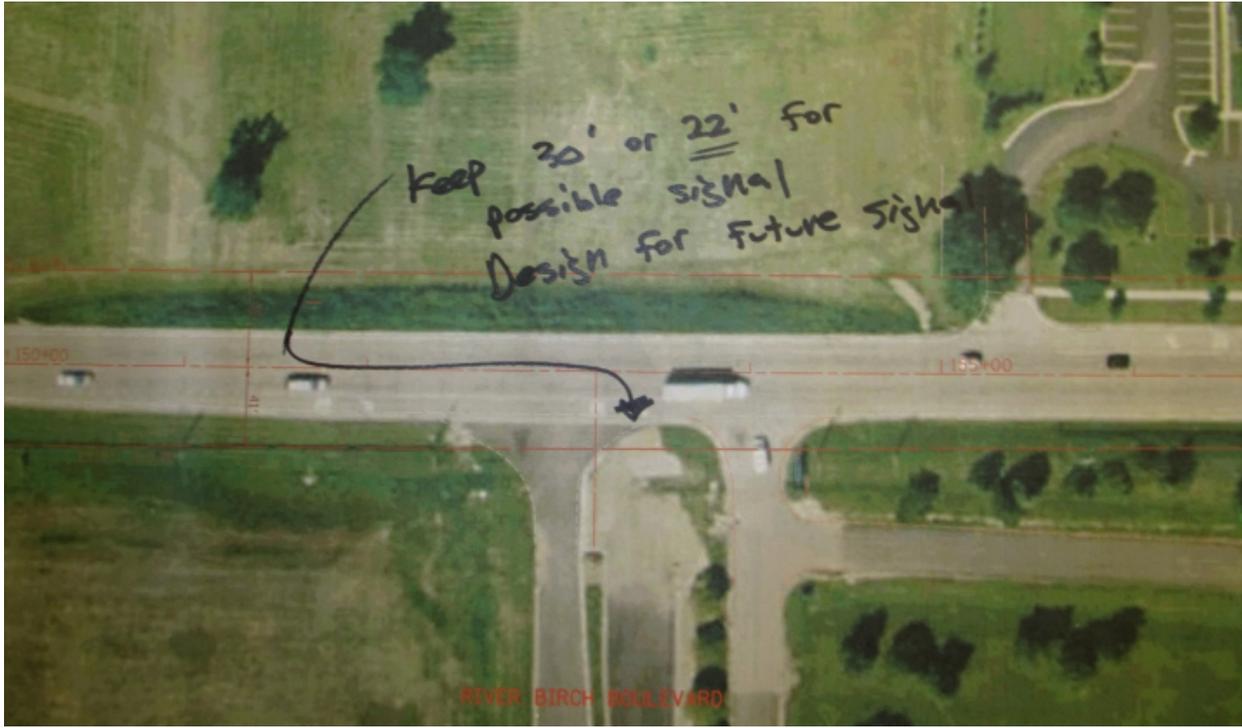
- Capacity improvement tools include add lanes, add turn lanes at intersections, and modify turn lane storage lengths and tapers
 - The previous Illinois Route 31 Study was introduced to the CAG. This study encompassed most of the current study limits from Illinois Route 176 to Bull Valley Road.
 - Major highlights of this study were described to the group which included the preferred alternative was a 4-lane cross section with a 30' raised median. It was noted that several intersections required dual left turn lanes to accommodate 2030 traffic. It was further described that this need would likely increase with 2040 traffic and that dual left turn lanes are best supported with 30' medians.
 - Mr. Clark explained to the CAG that the previous study is an alternative that should be considered while moving forward and that the Illinois Route 31 corridor is an SRA designation.
- **Introduction to Workshop: Alternatives Development and Review of Evaluation Criteria**
 - What will be accomplished during this workshop? Mr. Clark explained that preliminary design alternatives would be developed in this process and that they would be considered through further evaluation and refinement. It was also explained that all alternatives would be considered and recorded. Both on-alignment and off-alignment options could be discussed.
 - Mr. Clark informed the CAG members that the workshop session would be approximately 60 minutes and that we would report back in the same room after the workshop to summarize the alternatives developed. The breakout groups were defined by a regional focus so that alternatives could focus on smaller areas; however, feedback on any section of the project was welcomed in all groups. The three sections or breakout groups were generally described as follows:
 - South Section: Illinois Route 176 to Gracy Road
 - Center/Middle Section: Edgewood Road to Bull Valley Road
 - North Section: Bull Valley Road to Illinois Route 120
 - Group Exercise Introduction. CAG participants were asked to find a room that best concerned the personal interests of the CAG member. For example, if a CAG member was interested in developments and alternatives to be considered in the City of McHenry, they would have more discussions of alternatives in that area in the North Section Group. The Exercises were led by associates from CBBEL and were assisted by PSG members (STV and IDOT).
 - Each group was provided with 1"=50' scale plan sheets with aerial backgrounds that covered the entire project length from Illinois Route 176 to Illinois Route 120. Additionally, each group was provided with a set of 1"=50' scale transparencies that displayed a variety of possible improvements and cross sections. For off-alignment alternatives, each section was provided with a regional roadmap that included the areas of McHenry and Nunda Township as well as an additional aerial map that included a regional view encompassing Illinois Route 31 from Gracy Road to Illinois Route 120.
 - Each group's alternative development session gathered comments, concerns, and suggestions for alternatives based on an open format discussion with facilitation by the PSG as necessary. The full list of developed comments and alternatives during these sessions can be found at the end of this meeting summary
 - Once the workshop sessions were completed, all groups gathered in the original meeting room and presented the alternatives they developed.

- Mr. Clark discussed and reviewed the alternatives development evaluation process and how these alternatives would be evaluated by the evaluation criteria discussed from the previous CAG meeting.
- **Next Steps and Future Meetings**
 - Next Steps: Ongoing Engineering Project Development Activities (Traffic Analysis, Crash Analysis, and Environmental Surveys) and Development of complete Project Purpose and Need document per NEPA requirements. Purpose and Need document to be submitted to IDOT BDE and FHWA for review and approval. NEPA concurrence meeting planned for February 2012.
 - Future Meetings: CAG Meeting #4 tentatively scheduled for Mid January 2012 and Public Meeting #2 in Early February 2012. Exact date of CAG Meeting 4 will be emailed to CAG members and posted on website.

Workshop Comments and Alternative Development concepts:

Attached to this summary document are pictures showing the written comments posted on the aerial exhibit roll plot. *(See next page for start of pictures.)* A blank copy of each exhibit is available for download on the project website (including regional maps and transparencies).

South Section



Picture 1

Comment 1: When considering median design alternatives, it was suggested that the PSG consider both 30' and 22' medians to accommodate future signal designs. There was greater emphasis on the preference for a 22' median.

South Section



Picture 2

Comment 1: Near the intersection of Half Mile Trail, Improvement #1 was suggested in the southern Leg of the intersection. Improvement #1 involved a 30' raised median with two through lanes in each direction.

Comment 2: A future traffic signal is proposed at the Half Mile Trail intersection.

Comment 3: Arrows were drawn on the roadway to symbolize traffic lanes for the signalized intersection; dual left turn lanes were suggested in the south leg while a single right turn lane was requested in the northern leg.

Comment 4: It was suggested that the Right of Way line on the west side of Illinois Route 31 be held. If additional ROW is required that it is taken from the east side.

Comment 5: The water treatment plant on the east side of Illinois Route 31 was commented as "avoid structure."

Comment 6: The use of "BMPs" or Best Management Practices, to mitigate water quality or other environmental impacts, in the wetland areas was recommended.

South Section



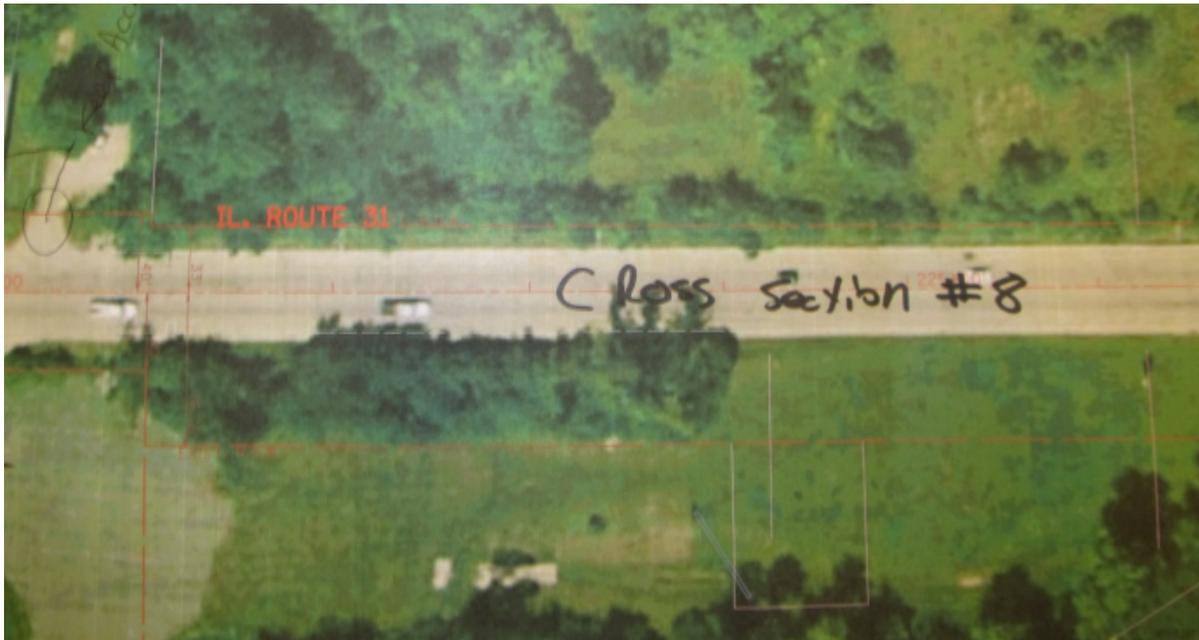
Picture 3

Comment 1: Just north of Half Mile Trail, there was a suggestion to avoid structures for TC Industries.

Comment 2: As mentioned in previous comments, the western Right of Way line should be held and that the eastern ROW line is adjusted for additional space. In addition to this, a similar supplemental comment was made to “widen” in the eastern direction.

Comment 3: There was a suggestion to “Keep Accesses” to TC industries. There are 3 driveways circled.

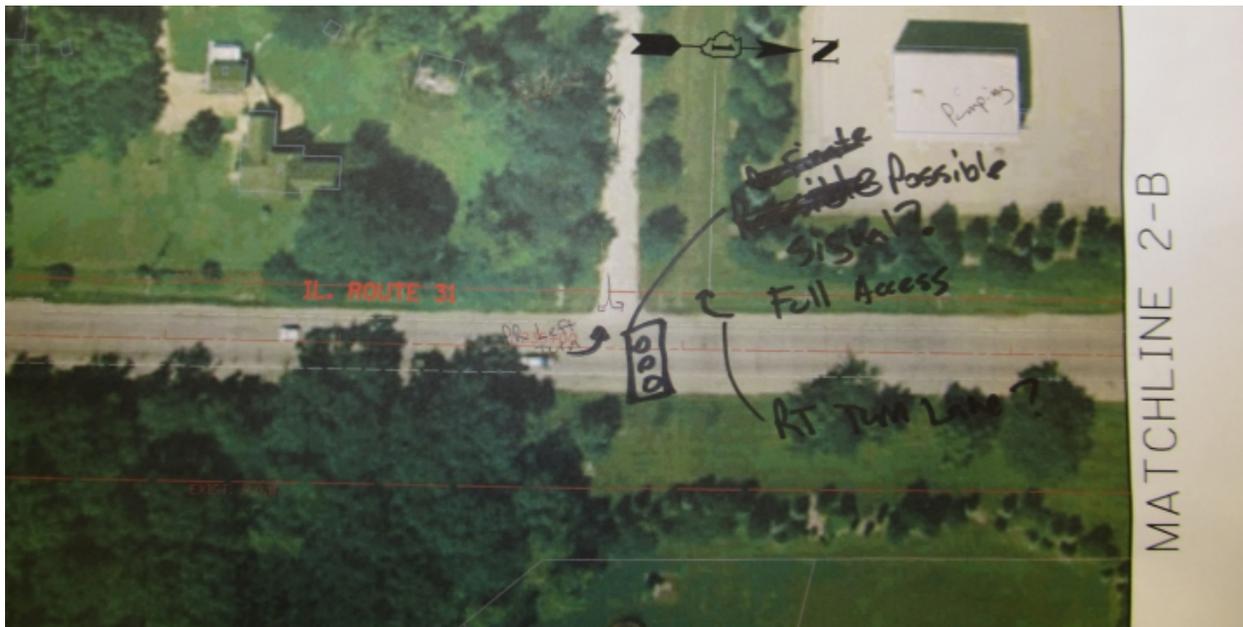
South Section



Picture 4

Comment 1: Cross section #8 was suggested for the roadway immediately north of Half Mile Trail past the 3 accesses to TC industries. Cross section #8 is a 22' raised median with two traffic lanes in each direction.

South Section



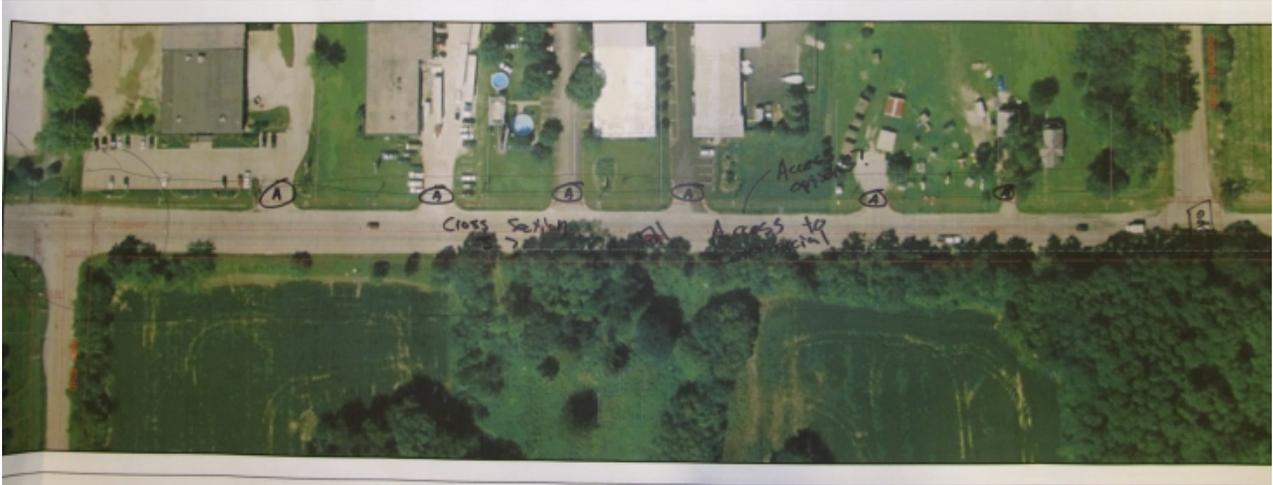
Picture 5

Comment 1: Cross section #8 was suggested for the roadway immediately north of Half Mile Trail past the 3 accesses driveways to TC industries. Cross section #8 is a 22' raised median with two traffic lanes in each direction.

Comment 2: Possible traffic signal location at the pumping station south of Ames Road. It was mentioned that this intersection should be improved for full access with a right turn lane for southbound movements and a left turn lane for northbound movements.

Comment 3: There was a note placed on a structure "pumping" and a note placed on the local road as "planning"

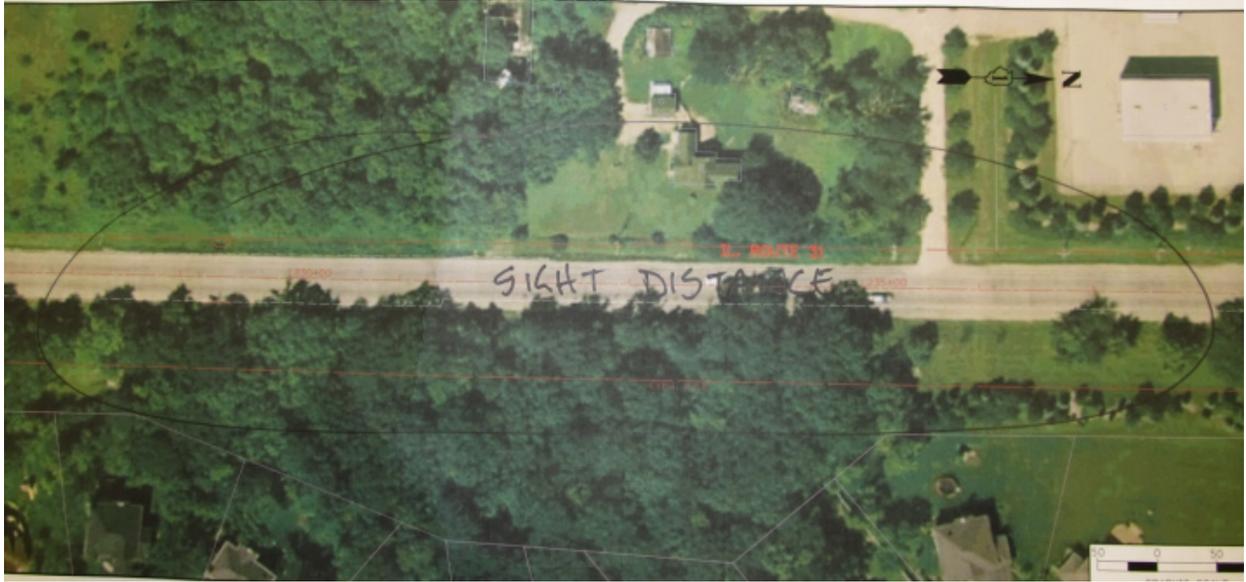
South Section



Picture 6

Comment 1: Between Ames and Edgewood Road, there are many accesses driveways to businesses that could be consolidated through frontage roads or other methods.

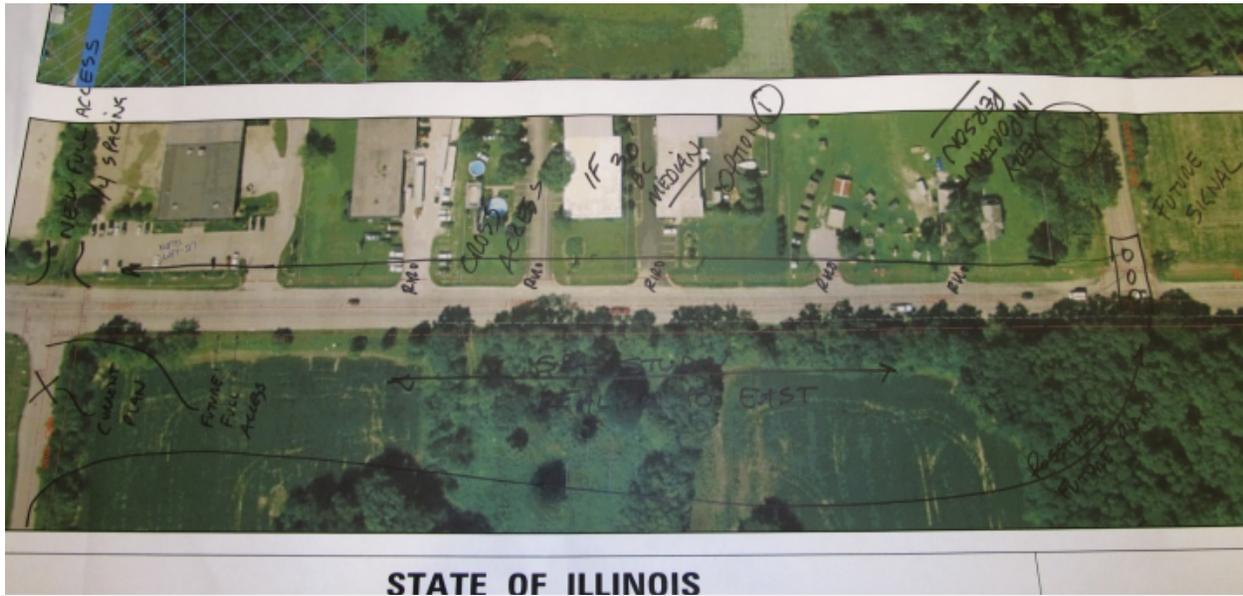
Comment 2: Cross Section #3 should be considered through this area, this cross section involves the use of a two way left turn lane (TWLTL).



Picture 1

Comment 1: Sight Distance is a problem in the highlighted area. This area is south of a private drive, south of Ames Road and north of Half Mile Trail.

Middle Section



Picture 2

Comment 1: ¼ mile spacing between existing Ames Road and Edgewood Road. Both should have full access with a frontage road connecting the businesses in between and removing direct access to Route 31(west side of Route 31).

Comment 2: If a frontage road is not feasible, than have each access as a Right-in Right-out (RIRO).

Comment 3: Ames Road will be realigned with Edgewood Road in a different planned project. This project would also eliminate the current access Ames Road has with Route 31.

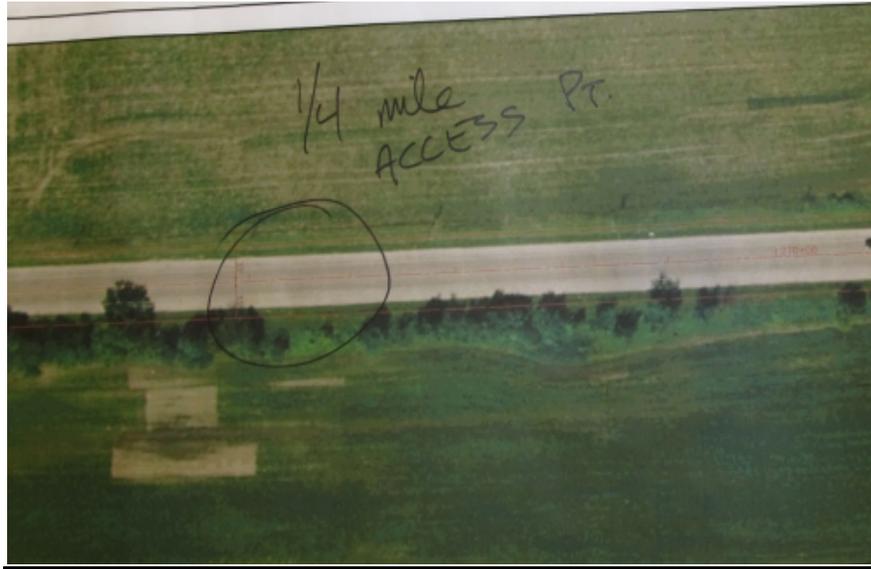
Comment 4: The alignment should be shifted to the east to minimize impacts to the businesses, their parking lots, and their accesses.

Comment 5: Edgewood Road is to be signalized (as part of a separate project).

Comment 6: Right of Way (ROW) acquisition on the south side of Edgewood Road should be minimized if frontage roads are constructed parallel to Route 31 to maintain accesses to businesses. A “very important person” would be impacted.

Comment 7: A new full access driveway (or frontage road access) was suggested for immediately south of the business immediately west of the intersection of Route 31 and Ames Road. This location is approximately ¼ mile south of Ames Road. The access should have a left turn lane along Route 31.

Middle Section



Picture 3

Comment 1: Illinois Route 31 is an SRA Route. It was highlighted by the discussion leader that full access points could be placed at quarter mile spacing. Full access points are locations where all vehicular movements can be made (Right, Through, and Left movements). This comment appears in various locations but is generally applicable to the entire project

Middle Section

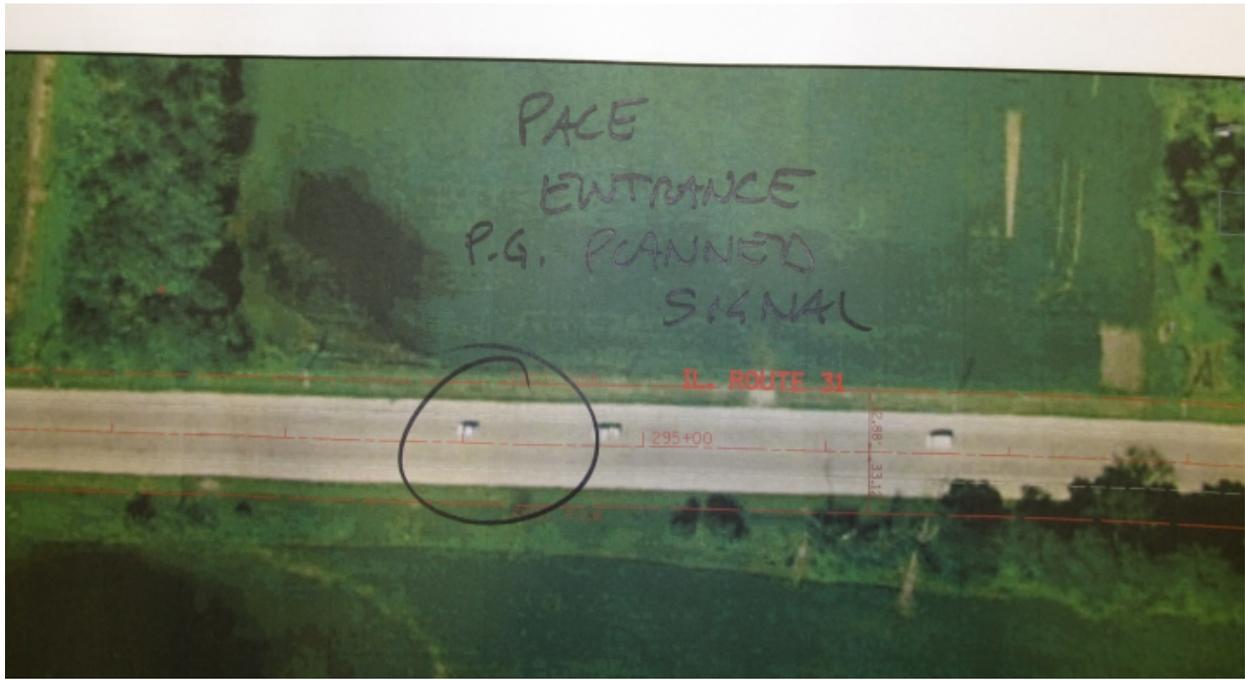


Picture 4

Comment 1: The Prairie Grove Town Center is proposed in this area, west of Route 31. The development includes extending Gracy Road to the west. A bike path overpass is proposed by the Village of Prairie Grove, south of Gracy Road. *(Based on post meeting review of the Village of Prairie Grove Town Center & Transit-Oriented Development Plan, the bike path is actually proposed north of the Gracy Road intersection; not as marked on the exhibit during the meeting.)*

Comment 2: Gracy Road would be signalized by the Village of Prairie Grove as part of their Town Center project.

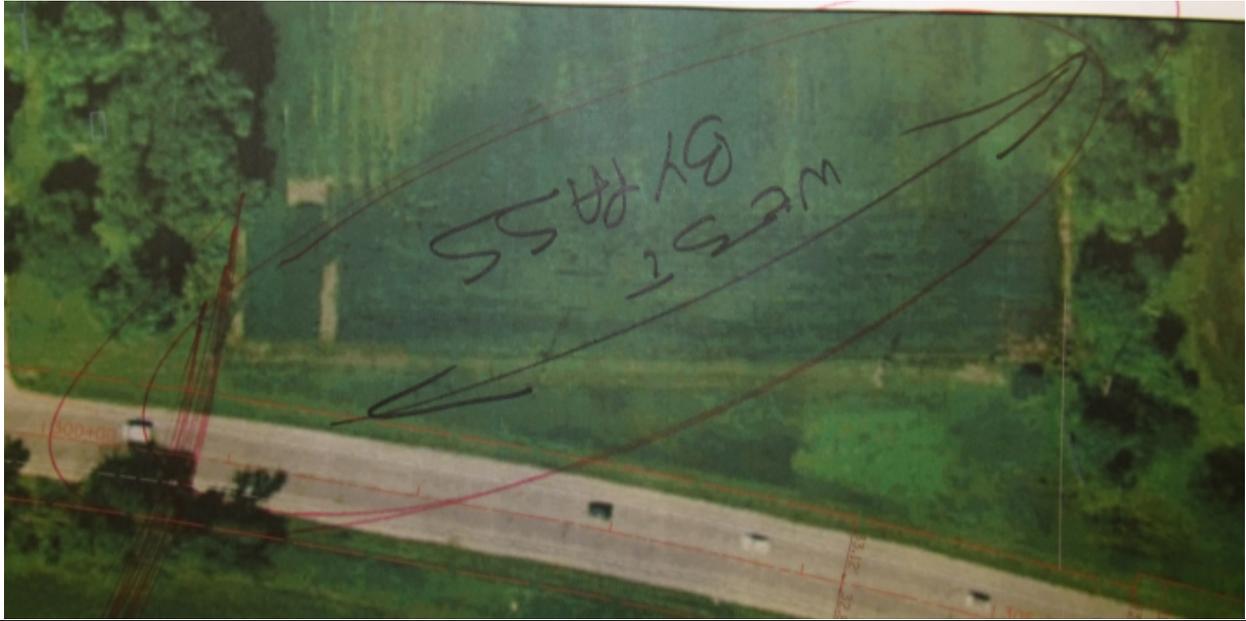
Middle Section



Picture 5

Comment 1: A new access road and Pace bus entrance is planned by the Village of Prairie Grove for the Town Center development. The new entrance is planned to include signalized traffic control. This location is approximately ¼ mile north of Gracy Road.

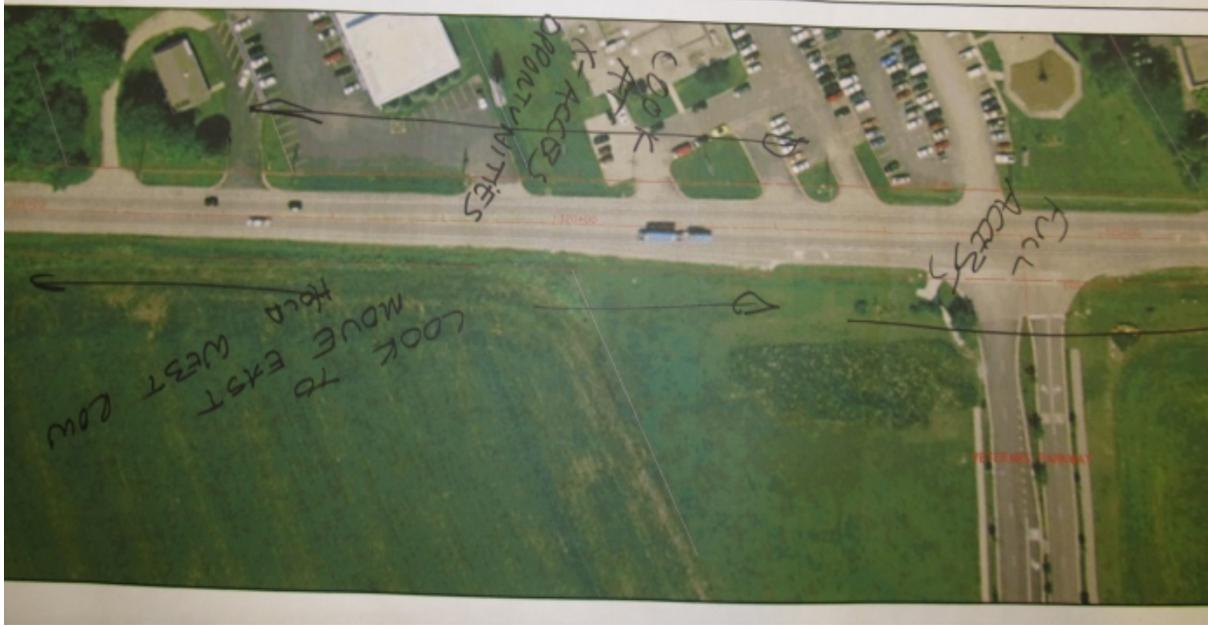
Middle Section



Picture 6

Comment 1: The McHenry West Bypass project could include a new interchange connection to Route 31 in this area. This area is between Gracy Road and Veterans Parkway. The PSG would investigate this bypass project to determine its status and history. Depending on the status of this project, Route 31 will have alternatives developed to meet the current transportation needs and regional planning developed by the state.

Middle Section



Picture 7

Comment 1: Impacts to businesses along the western Right of Way (ROW) should be minimized in the areas noted. This area is immediately south of Veterans Parkway but could be typical for nearby areas. It was suggested that the PSG should shift the proposed roadway to the east and hold the western ROW line when developing their alternatives.

Comment 2: Investigation of consolidated access opportunities should be investigated. Where it is feasible, adjacent lots could be connected to allow for a reduction of accesses to the same or connected properties.

Comment 3: Full access was requested to be maintained at Veterans parkway

Middle Section

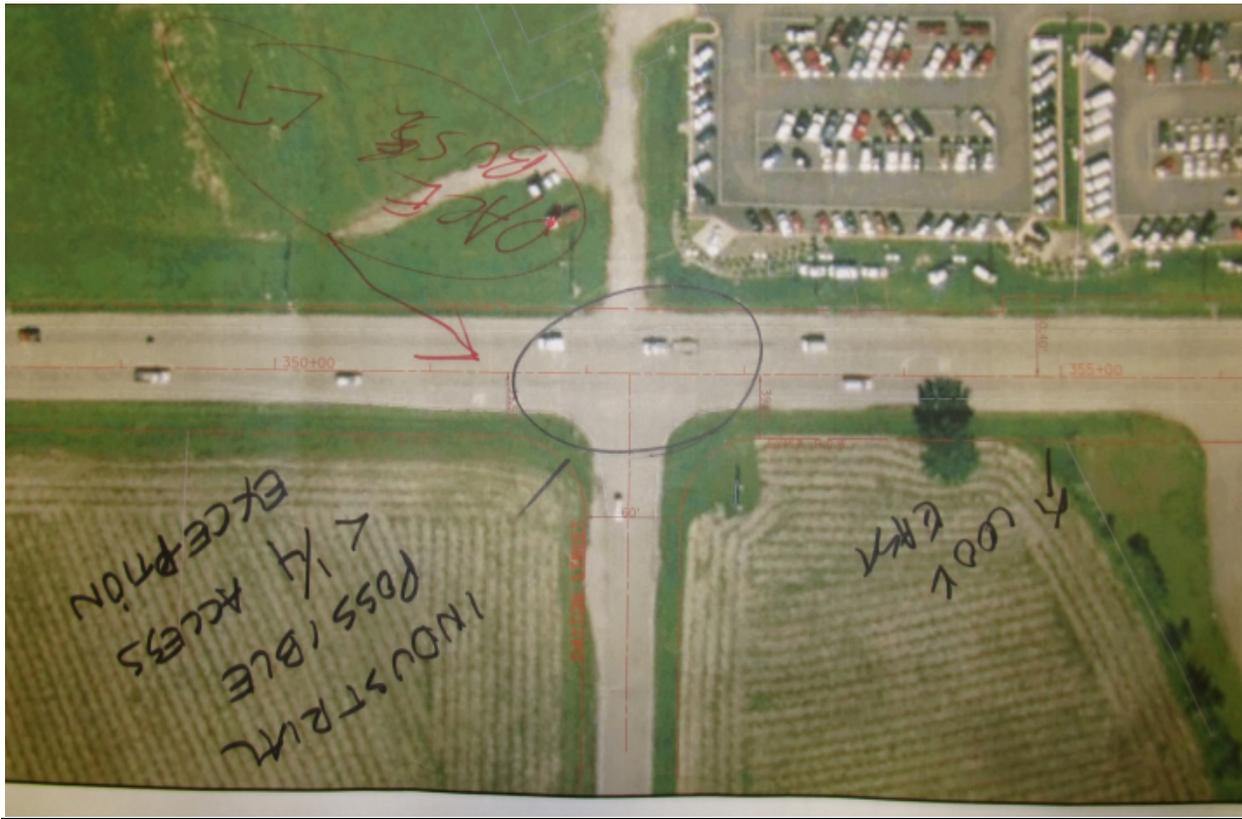


Picture 8

Comment 1: The intersection of Route 31 and Albany Street /Prime Parkway was identified as an existing traffic signal location and was noted that a “Pace Center” is planned to the west, along Prime Parkway.

Comment 2: As mentioned in a previous comment, the ROW acquisition should focus on the east and avoid impacts to the west of Illinois Route 31

Middle Section



Picture 9

Comment 1: Dayton Street was identified with the comment: "Industrial, possible <1/4 mile access exception. This intersection is 1000' north of Albany Street and Prime Parkway.

Comment 2: Pace busses make left turns at this intersection. Make sure that alternatives safely accommodate Pace bus movements.

Comment 3: As mentioned in a previous comment, the ROW acquisition should focus on the east and avoid impacts to the west of Illinois Route 31

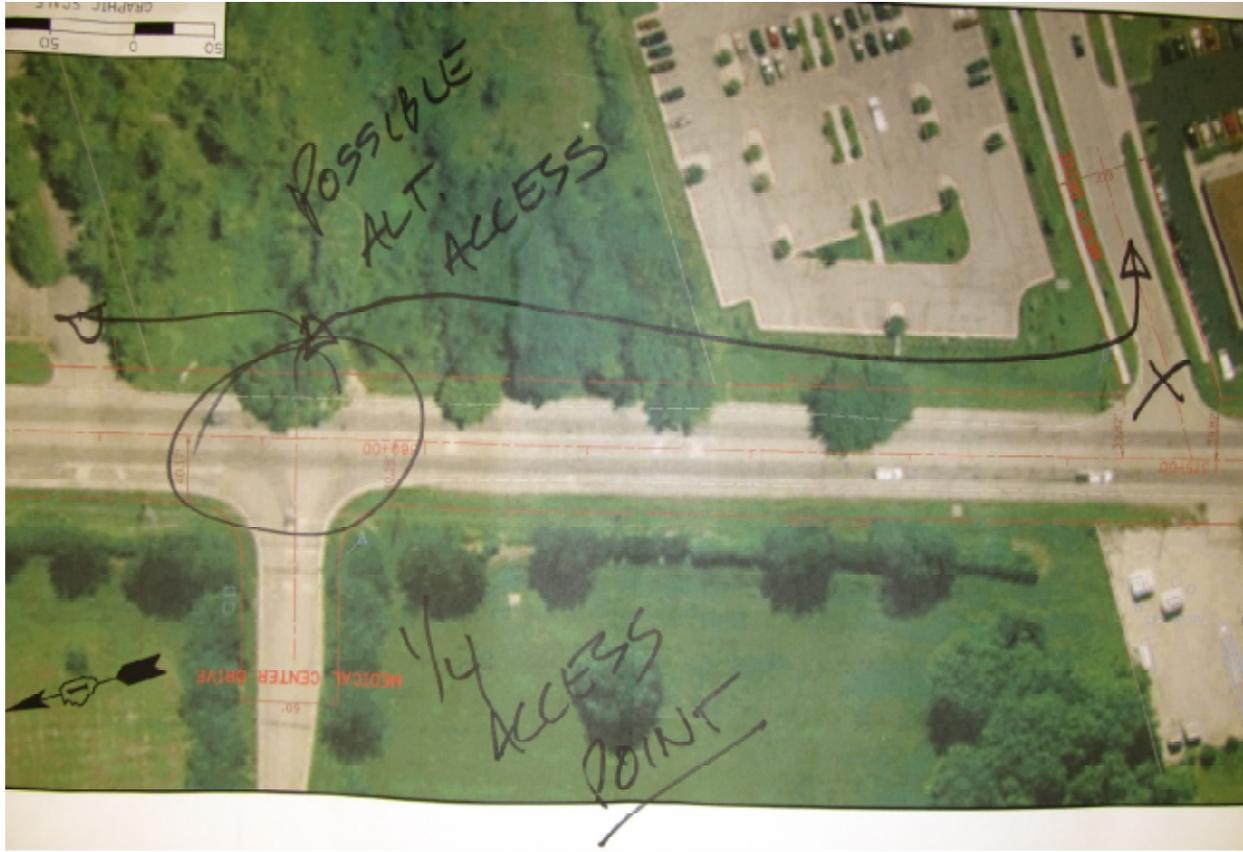
Middle Section



Picture 10

Comment 1: Shamrock Lane was identified as an existing signal location.

Middle Section



Picture 11

Comment 1: Medical Center Drive and Mercy Drive are closely spaced intersections. It was recommended that alternatives be investigated to consolidate these two roadways into one access.

Comment 2: As mentioned in previous comments, Medical Center Drive was identified as an intersection within the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile accesses per mile SRA guideline. Comment #1 of this picture may need to be implemented to satisfy this design standard.

North Section



Picture 1

Comment 1: Cross section improvement #3 for a bidirectional left turn lane is “scary”. It was suggested to not use this section.

Comment 2: Eliminate cross section Improvement #2; this cross section involves having 3 traffic lanes in each direction plus a 30’ raised median. It was agreed as a group that this section was too large for the north section.

Comment 3: It was suggested that improvement #8 (2 lanes each direction with 22’ raised median) was a better cross section for the downtown area, especially away from intersections.

North Section



Picture 2

Comment 1: Suggestion to include 5' bike lanes on both sides of the roadway in the northern sections where ROW is limited

Comment 2: "trail dangerous down town" was marked on the exhibit to support comment 1

The following conflicting comment was expressed by the CAG members but was not noted directly on the exhibit:

Comment 3: Prefer off road path since it is safer for use by recreational users, including small children.

North Section



Picture 3

Comment 1: Suggestion to use 11' lanes in the downtown area to minimize impacts

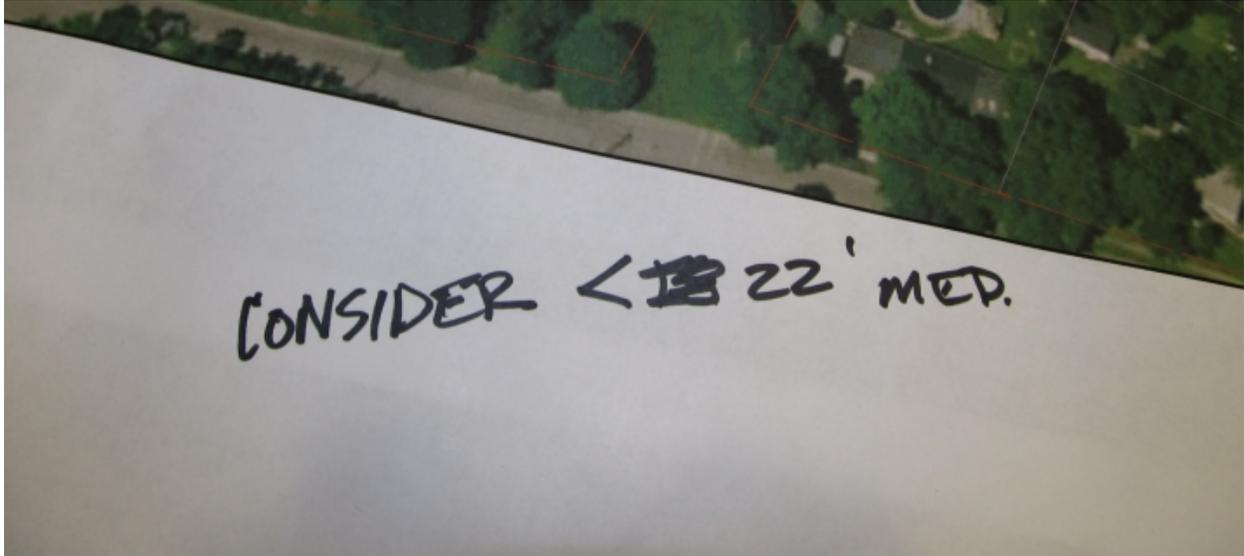
Comment 2: Suggestion to eliminate parking north of Main Street.

The following comments was expressed by the CAG members but were not noted directly on the exhibit:

Comment 3: There is already quite a bit of parking along many of the side streets. Consider elimination of all parking along IL Route 31. If necessary, additional parking can be provided via new parking lots.

Comment 4: Consider converting closely spaced side streets (i.e. Waukegan Road) to Cul-de-sacs. If cul-de-sac is not possible, make some of the side streets right-in and right-out only.

North Section



Picture 4

Comment 1: In the segments north of Bull Valley Road, consider minimizing the median size and using less than 22' medians.

North Section



Picture 5

Comment 1: A regional concept was presented which would involve converting part of existing Illinois Route 31 into a one-way street or a couplet. IL Route 31 could be converted to one-way southbound and Green Street into a one-way roadway for northbound traffic. The drawn concept involved the one-way streets extending from Illinois Route 120 to Bull Valley/Charles Miller Road, with the major connection between IL Route 31 and Green Street via these roadways, but other shorter couplet sections and connection options are possible.

CAG Meeting #3 completed at approximately 3:30 p.m.

The next steps for the study will include the continuation of ongoing engineering project development activities (e.g. Traffic Analysis / Projections, Crash Analysis, and Environmental Surveys), the development of the project Purpose and Need document per NEPA requirements, and the development of a range of initial design alternatives based on discussions from the workshop session. The next CAG meeting is tentatively scheduled for mid-January. When an exact date is established, CAG members will be contacted via email and the project website will also be updated. At this meeting the following activities are tentatively planned: present complete draft Purpose and Need document and discuss range of initial design alternatives for presentation at the next Public Meeting.