
To: Citizen Advisory Group
From: Jason Stringer - IDOT
Subject: CAG Meeting #6
Date: December 20, 2011



CAG Meeting #6 was held at EIGERlab, 605 Fulton Avenue, Rockford, Illinois, on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 beginning at 6:00 PM. This was the sixth in a series of meetings with the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) for the IL 2 (N. Main Street) project from Auburn Street to Riverside Boulevard in Rockford. In attendance were the following CAG members:

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Richard Berman | Mike Lenox |
| Curtis Carlson | Scott Olson |
| Jeremy Carter | Tom Rotello |
| Diana Cooper | Zak Rotello |
| Richard Fang | Jamie Rott |
| George Graham | Mark Smith |
| Jonah Katz | |

Masood Ahmad (IDOT) greeted the group and convened the meeting. He explained that a Project Study Group (PSG) meeting was recently held to discuss the details of the project as developed to date. He noted that a large part of that meeting focused on the proposed access layout.

Jon Estrem (HR Green) then recapped the more recent history of the project. He reminded the group that at CAG Meeting #5 one of the primary issues of interest going forward was to investigate ways to implement access management as a means of further enhancing the safe & efficient flow of traffic along the corridor. He explained that the design team has been busy accomplishing this & asked Chris Hartke (HR Green) to highlight the results.

Chris pointed out that the existing corridor involves 136 driveways along N. Main Street and the side streets within the limits of work. The layout as presented includes 99 driveways which tallies to elimination of 37 driveways. This is in part due to the fact that properties slated for total acquisition will not be afforded driveways with the project. If the acquired properties are sold as excess right-of-way, it will be the purchaser's responsibility to seek a permit for a driveway at a location that fits the needs of the property as developed. Total acquisitions account for 16 of the driveways eliminated. The others are the result of proposed sharing of driveways (4) or simply closing driveways (17) where a property has more than one to begin with.

Chris elaborated on the thought process behind sharing and elimination of driveways. He pointed out that in some cases properties appear to have an agreement with their neighbor whereby parking lots are shared. In a case such as that, consideration was given to combining access for the two properties into a single driveway located at the shared property line. When the land acquisition process takes place, if it is determined

that shared access is not viable, it may be necessary to reconsider the access consolidation & provide separate driveways for each property.

With respect to simple elimination of driveways, Chris explained that properties currently with more than one driveway were examined to determine if it is reasonable to expect the property to continue with fewer driveways. In some cases, if a side street provides access to the property, the N. Main driveway may be eliminated. In other cases, where two or more driveways serve the property from N. Main, consideration was given to removing one or more. In all cases, consideration was given to how the property will function after the project is completed.

An example of this is at the Crown Machine property north of Eddy Avenue. For that property, parking has a diagonal orientation that promotes use of the south driveway as an "enter only" and the north driveway as the exit. The proposed layout eliminates the south driveway. In order for the property to continue to function, it is necessary to not only restripe the parking stalls but also to expand the parking lot toward N. Main so that vehicles have enough room to maneuver in & out of the stalls. The owner will not incur this cost since it is a direct result of the project.

Other examples highlighted by Chris included Village Green Nursery where the three existing driveways along N. Main will be reduced to one at the south end of the property. The proposed driveway will be widened to the maximum allowable width. It will supplement the existing driveway along Eddy Avenue. In addition, Jon explained that the project will include construction of curb along the parking lot for this property since it abuts the right-of-way line. This will help to prevent parked vehicles from encroaching on the space set aside for the multi-use path. The same will be done for the majority of commercial properties throughout the corridor that have a parking lot abutting the right-of-way line.

Finally, Chris pointed out consideration of the functionality of properties after the project is completed led to adding a driveway for Midas. At that location, widening the roadway & adding a multi-use path results in insufficient space for vehicles to maneuver from the overhead garage doors to a driveway at the north end of the property. In an effort to preserve the business, a second driveway was added near the south end of the property. Jon explained it is not a certainty that this will allow the property to continue with the current use. If during the appraisal process it is determined the additional driveway is not sufficient, the plan to add a driveway may be reconsidered.

Dick Berman asked if consideration was given to eliminating direct access from select side streets to N. Main through the use of cul-de-sacs. Jon indicated this was not considered as it typically would happen only if the City specifically requests it or if accident history points to specific problems with a side street. Since neither is the case for the side streets in this corridor, the concept was not pursued. Jeremy Carter added that he suspects emergency services would object to the concept as it potentially would have a detrimental effect on response times. He will raise the question with City officials, but does not expect the suggestion to be implemented.

Jon continued by discussing some the additional details that have been incorporated into the layout. One such detail is a short stretch of raised median on either side of the

railroad crossing south of Pierce Avenue. The raised median is currently a standard detail for at-grade crossings. It helps to prevent impatient motorists from “cheating” during train activity by preventing them from weaving their way around the lowered crossing arms.

Jon also noted the layout includes relocation of Country Club Beach (CCB) Road. This involves turning CCB at a near-90° angle to cross the tracks & intersect with N. Main directly across from Pierce Avenue. It eliminates the severely skewed intersection CCB currently has with N. Main. In addition, it will eliminate the current tendency of some drivers from turning from southbound N. Main into the egress side of the street.

Jon pointed out that concurrence from the railroad & ICC will be necessary before it is officially a part of the project. Acceptance is not a foregone conclusion because railroads typically are not in favor of adding crossings. It is the design team’s hope, however, that in this case concurrence will be obtained. The layout is clearly an improvement over the existing condition in terms of train-vehicle interaction. In addition, the low traffic volumes associated with both CCB as well as the railroad should help.

Jon explained that the option shown for relocating CCB is one of several investigated. Alternatives tying it into one of the intersections to the north were discarded due to elevation differences between existing CCB & the railroad. The option considered as a backup to what is being shown involves swinging CCB south then west in such a way that it intersects with N. Main near the southern end of the All American Self-Storage property. This was not selected as the preferred option because it would necessitate total acquisition of that property. Nevertheless, it is available if necessary.

Dick Berman indicated his hopes that the proposed alternative would tie into Halsted so that it could take advantage of the signals there. Jon expressed understanding but reiterated that elevation differences prevented that. Dick also asked if the combined traffic volumes of CCB & Pierce would take it past the threshold where signals could now be justified. Jon indicated this is not the case. Jon McCormick added that there is a stringent procedure utilized nationwide for determining whether signals are warranted at an intersection. Those warrants were examined at this location as well as all other intersections throughout the corridor. The only locations meeting signal warrants are those intersections already signalized.

Next Jon explained there are mailboxes along the west side of N. Main north of the railroad. These are primarily in the area from Pierce to Deborah & are shown on the exhibits as a black “flag” symbol. In an effort to enhance safety during mail delivery and pickup, IDOT policy calls for the addition of mailbox turnouts along the edge of highway curb and gutter. The turnout essentially functions as a shoulder that is wide enough to drive on without the vehicle encroaching into the highway driving lane. Three options were considered in this issue:

- Provide one individual turnout for each mailbox.
- Create one long turnout that spans an entire block where mailboxes are present.
- Relocate mailboxes to a centralized location as deemed reasonable & provide an individual turnout for it.

The last option was selected & is shown on the exhibit with red “flag” symbols representing the consolidated mailbox locations. It was felt that this option offers the highest level of safe operations while minimizing the associated costs. Where mailboxes are relocated, the new mailbox will have a locking feature that will help prevent mail theft. Coordination was done with the local postmaster to ensure this approach is acceptable. It is the team’s intent to display this option at the upcoming Public Information Open House. When asked for comments, the CAG members indicated their concurrence with the approach.

Discussion then focused on the proposed midblock pedestrian crosswalk shown near Spectrum School north of Eddy Avenue. Jon explained that there are concerns about pedestrian safety given the presence of the school in conjunction with the addition of the multi-use path along the west side of the highway. Spectrum is a private school for children between the ages of kindergarten and high school. The nearest opportunity for a pedestrian signalized crossing is at Eddy Avenue which is deemed to be too far to effectively meet the needs of the children. The proposed crossing would be signalized & would potentially make use of a relatively recent innovation called “HAWK” signals. These are an extremely visible signal alternative that make use of yellow & red lights and are activated by the pedestrian through a push button device. The duration of “red time” would be appropriate to allow pedestrians of all types to cross safely from one side to the other.

Several in the group indicated there is very little pedestrian traffic at this location. The majority of children either are bused or dropped off by car. Jon noted the addition of the multi-use path may trigger increased pedestrian activity. Jeremy Carter indicated use of HAWK signals is a topic currently under discussion at the City. He pointed out that some feel its lack of a green signal head renders it noncompliant as an official signal. As such, it is unknown if the City would concur with its use or would rather use a more traditional approach. Jon added that because the City is responsible for the cost of installing & maintaining signals such as this, it is necessary for the City to concur with the concept regardless of the equipment employed.

Jeremy also asked if a staggered crosswalk and/or raised median were considered as part of the proposed layout. Jon indicated these ideas were discussed at the recent PSG meeting. It was concluded that raised median should not be implemented because it would hamper access for Spectrum school. In addition, it was felt that a short stretch of raised median would be undesirable from a maintenance standpoint because it could hamper snow removal operations. Furthermore, it would be difficult to remove snow in the median area within the crossing area itself. With respect to the staggered crosswalk, it is believed that adding to the amount of time a pedestrian must spend within the limits of the crosswalk would lengthen the duration of red time and thereby have a negative effect on traffic operations.

Richard Fang suggested that the addition of a crosswalk of any kind would create delays and be detrimental to traffic operations. Jon responded that if the crosswalk is highly utilized, there will admittedly be an impact on the flow of traffic. He pointed out, however, that if this is the case, a protected crosswalk would be justified simply by the high use and not including it could lead to safety concerns for pedestrians. On the other

hand, if the crosswalk is not utilized to a great extent, disruption to the flow of traffic should be minimal.

Mike Lenox suggested that coordination be conducted with Spectrum school to determine if it believes the addition of the multi-use path will result in an increase of the number of children crossing at this location. Jon indicated this would be done.

The next topic of discussion involved the alignment of the multi-use path in the vicinity of Brown Park. The original intent was to expand the existing sidewalk that meanders through the eastern portion of the park to a 10-foot width. This was in part proposed to ensure that viability of the park is not compromised in any way. This is important because parks are a protected resource. Jon continued by noting a suggestion was made at the PSG meeting to straighten the path in the northernmost portion leading to Custer Avenue. The purpose would be to route pedestrians & bicyclists in a more logical manner so that they are led directly to the crosswalk rather than out of their way. The group was unsure as to why the park's existing sidewalk was built as it is, but agreed it could have the effect of promoting crossing of Custer at the wrong location. They concurred with the concept of straightening it in that area. Jon indicated coordination would be conducted with the Park District to ensure they agree this will not have a negative effect on the intended use of park land.

A related issue involves the multi-use path along the Riverside. A multi-use path currently begins on the south side just west of the Rock River bridge. Reconstruction of the Riverside pavement is slated to end just east of the main entrance to the mall. Rather than ending the proposed multi-use path at that location, the layout now includes an extension of the path an additional 600 feet to the east to connect with the existing path. This will preclude a gap in the multi-use path.

Masood indicated that another driveway issue in this area merits discussion. The existing layout for access to McDonalds consists of a driveway that tees into North Towne Mall's main entrance. That entrance includes a raised median from its intersection with Riverside Boulevard several hundred feet into the property. The layout encourages motorists leaving the McDonalds property to turn left & proceed the wrong way along the mall's entrance to access Riverside. Masood noted he has received comments from a concerned citizen that this potentially hazardous maneuver is taking place. The layout shown in the exhibits proposes reconfiguration of the McDonalds driveway in such a way that it would be difficult to use for anything other than an entrance only. Richard Fang expressed concern that the change could potentially affect sales for McDonalds. He indicated he would discuss the matter with the owner & report back to the design team.

Sam Abdullah indicated he believes each property owner affected by driveway removals/relocations should be notified of the intended changes to afford them an opportunity to provide input. He added that this has been a standard approach for IDOT in the past. Jon responded that the method for doing so would be discussed with the rest of the design team.

Masood noted that coordination with the City will be necessary to gain an understanding regarding conformance of properties to zoning regulations in the post-

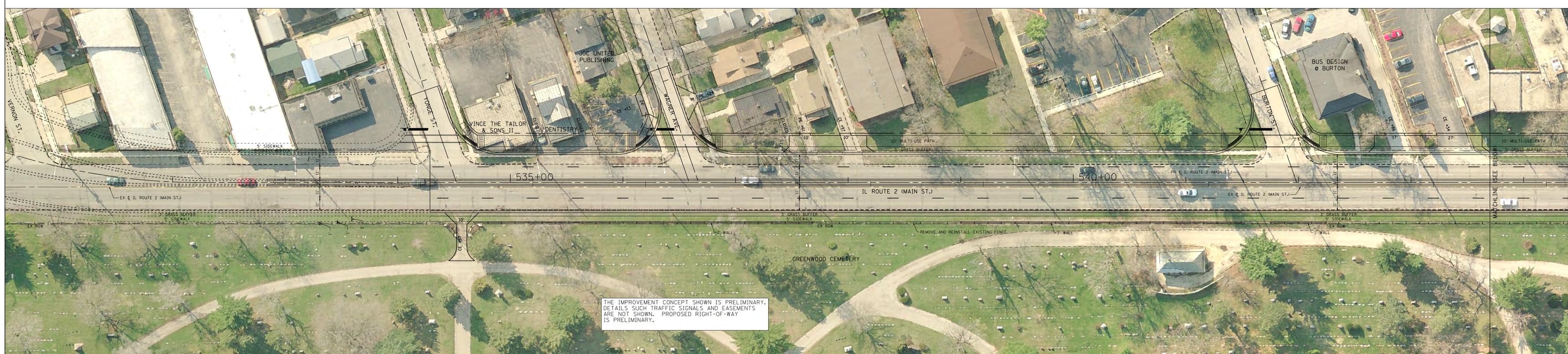
acquisition phase. Based on experience from other recent projects, the City has interpreted its ordinances to read that acquisitions for highway projects trigger its rules regarding green space and the number of parking stalls. IDOT would like to work to determine if that will be the case with this project and if properties in a non-conforming state prior to the project will be required to conform after it. This could have a significant impact on the cost of land acquisition for the project since the need to bring properties into conformance would be a consideration when appraisers determine fair market value for the acquisition. It was noted that the five-foot "buffer" area behind the curb along the multi-use path may be considered as part of the total need. There may be opportunities to add green space where properties will be fully acquired. Masood would like to conduct this coordination in the near future & involve the CAG in the discussions. Jamie Rott indicated she will inform the appropriate City officials of the matter so coordination can begin.

Other issues raised prior to concluding the meeting were:

- Would it be possible to increase the 11' lane widths from Custer to Eddy to 12'? Jon indicated the use of 11' lanes in this area was studied & determined to be adequate. Given the extent of effort invested by the design team to advance the engineering layout to its current status, sufficient reasons would be needed to justify the change. In this case the team feels the change is not justified. As such, in keeping with past decisions of the CAG & PSG, the plan is to proceed with the lane widths shown.
- When is project construction anticipated to begin & how long will it take to build? Masood noted Phase I is expected to be complete in Spring 2012. Phase II design which includes preparation of contract plans typically takes about 18 months for a project such as this. With the level of land acquisition involved, the earliest construction target year would be 2015. Many factors will be considered, including statewide priorities, before an actual letting date can be set. Construction duration would likely involve two full building seasons.
- Jason Stringer noted that the CSS process does not end with the preliminary engineering efforts. Rather, it continues through Phase II design as well as construction and beyond. Accordingly, this CAG group will be asked to continue its efforts throughout the process.
- Will traffic be maintained during construction? Jon indicated this is still to be analyzed, but it is highly likely that the work will be staged & traffic maintained with at least one lane in each direction.
- Are property owners compensated for disruption of traffic during construction. Jon indicated this is not considered a compensable damage.

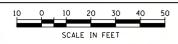
Jon thanked the group & indicated the next round of CAG & PSG meetings are expected to take place in February or March. The purpose will be to share the proposed right-of-way layout (including temporary construction easements) as well as any other design refinements. Following those meetings, the next Public Information Open House will be conducted to gather comments & concerns from the public.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:00 PM.



THE IMPROVEMENT CONCEPT SHOWN IS PRELIMINARY. DETAILS SUCH AS TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND EASEMENTS ARE NOT SHOWN. PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY IS PRELIMINARY.

SEGMENT 1



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STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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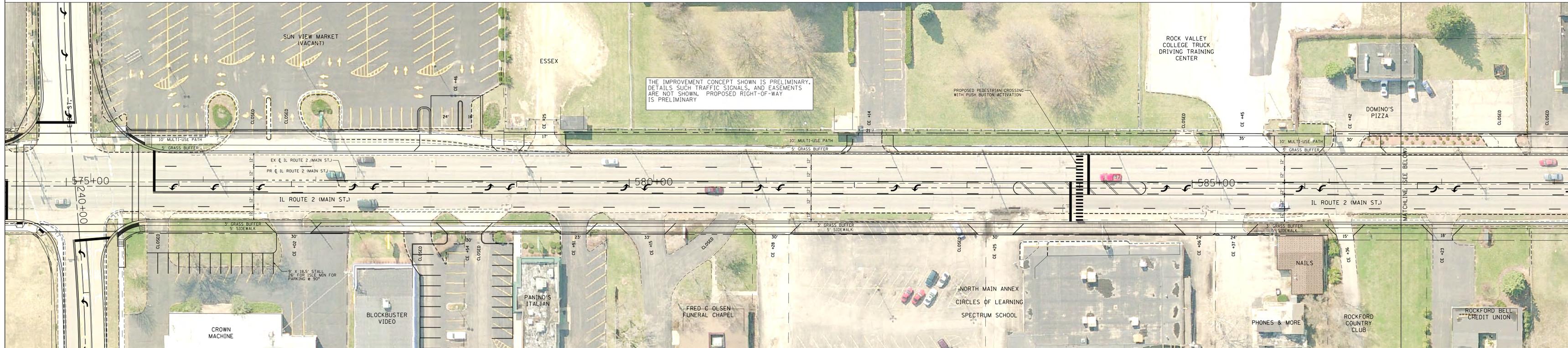
SEGMENT 2



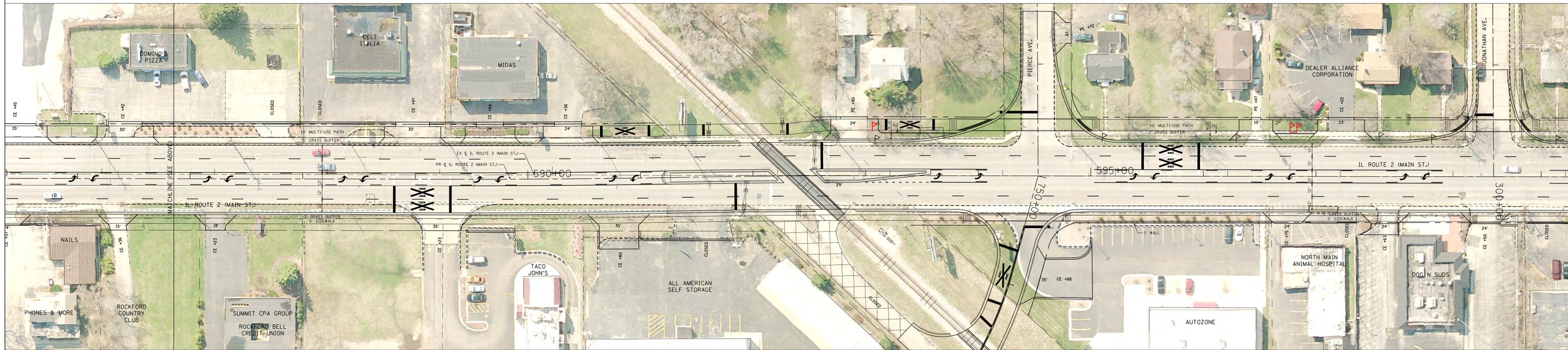
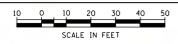
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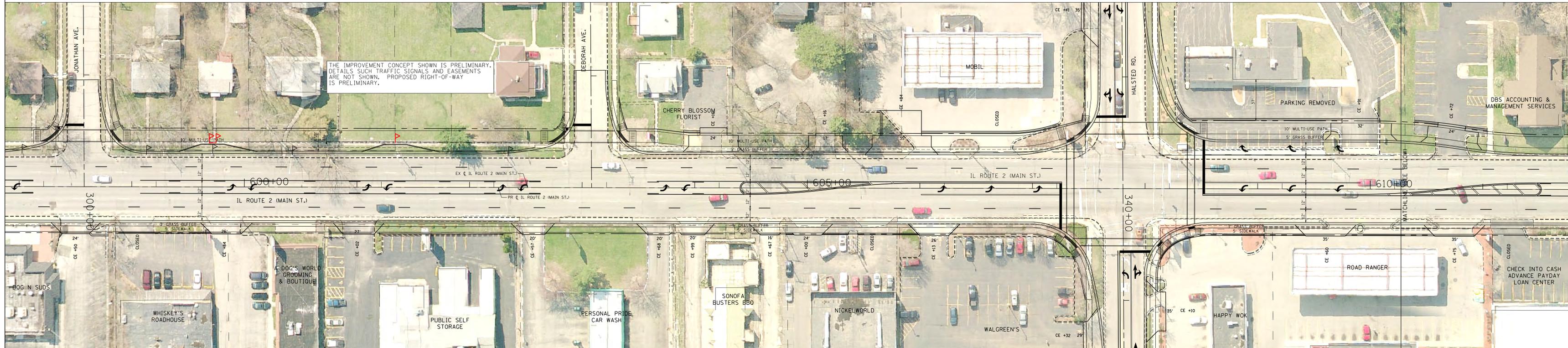
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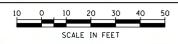
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| EDDY AVENUE TO JONATHAN AVENUE SEGMENT 3 | | | |
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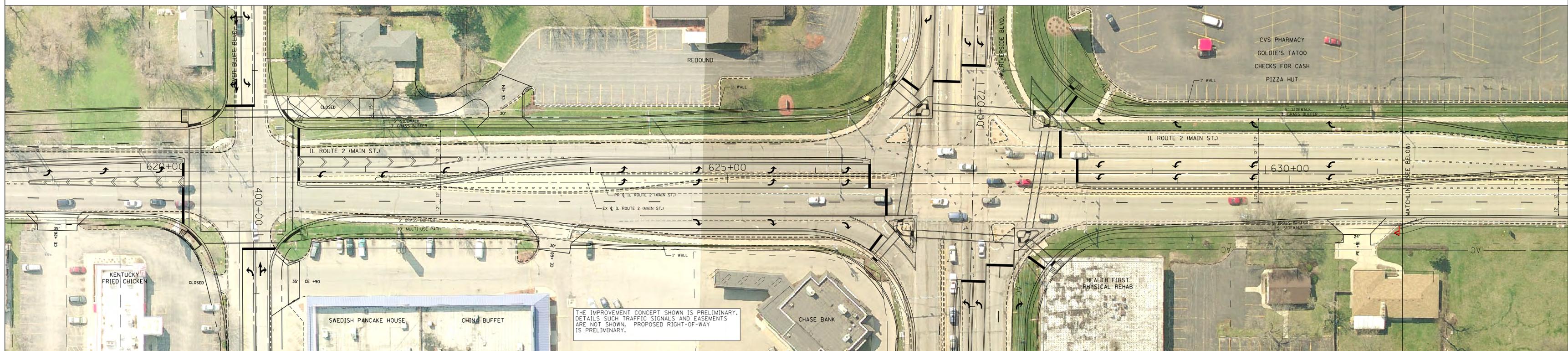
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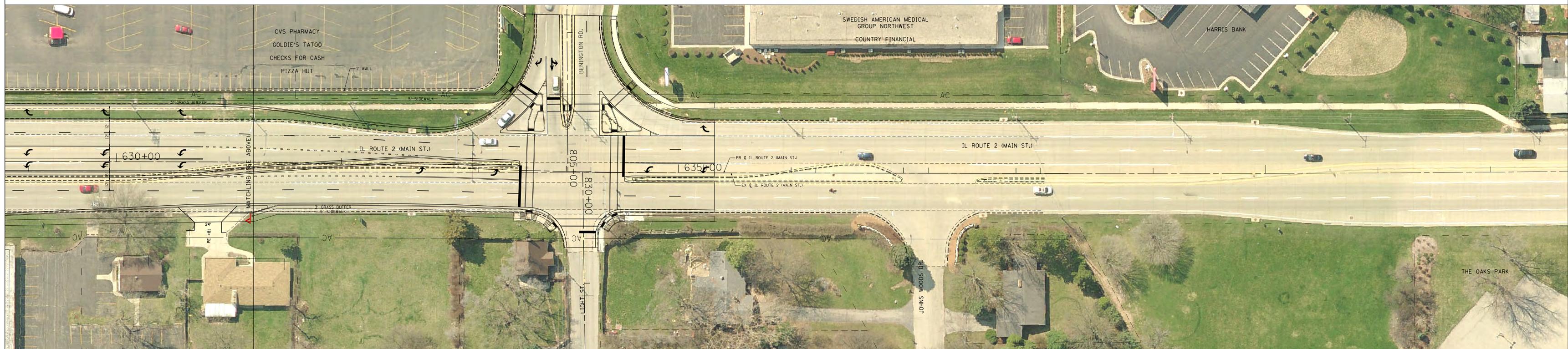
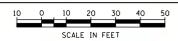
STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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| JONATHAN AVENUE TO RIVER BLUFF BOULEVARD | | | |
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SEGMENT 4



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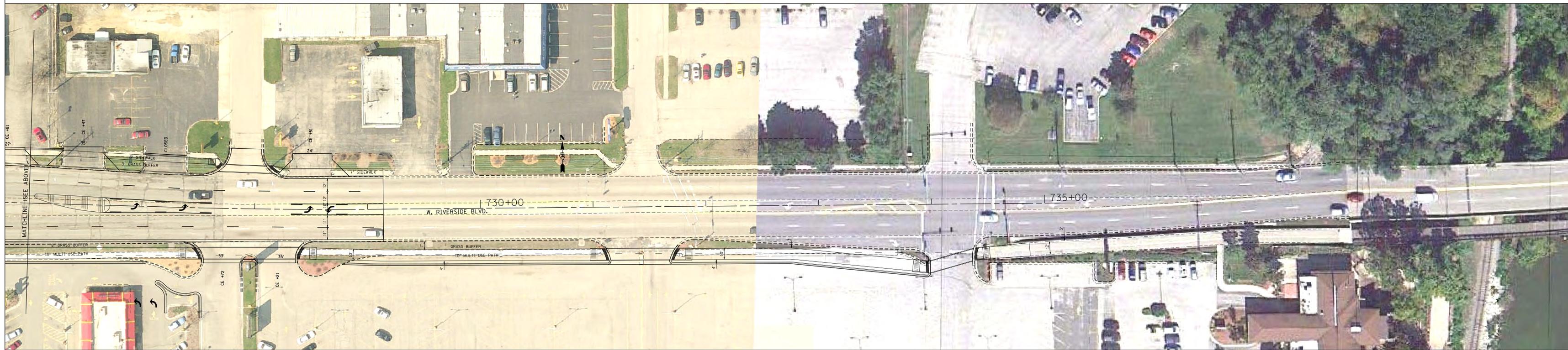
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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| RIVER BLUFF BOULEVARD TO BENNINGTON ROAD | | | |
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RIVERSIDE BOULEVARD

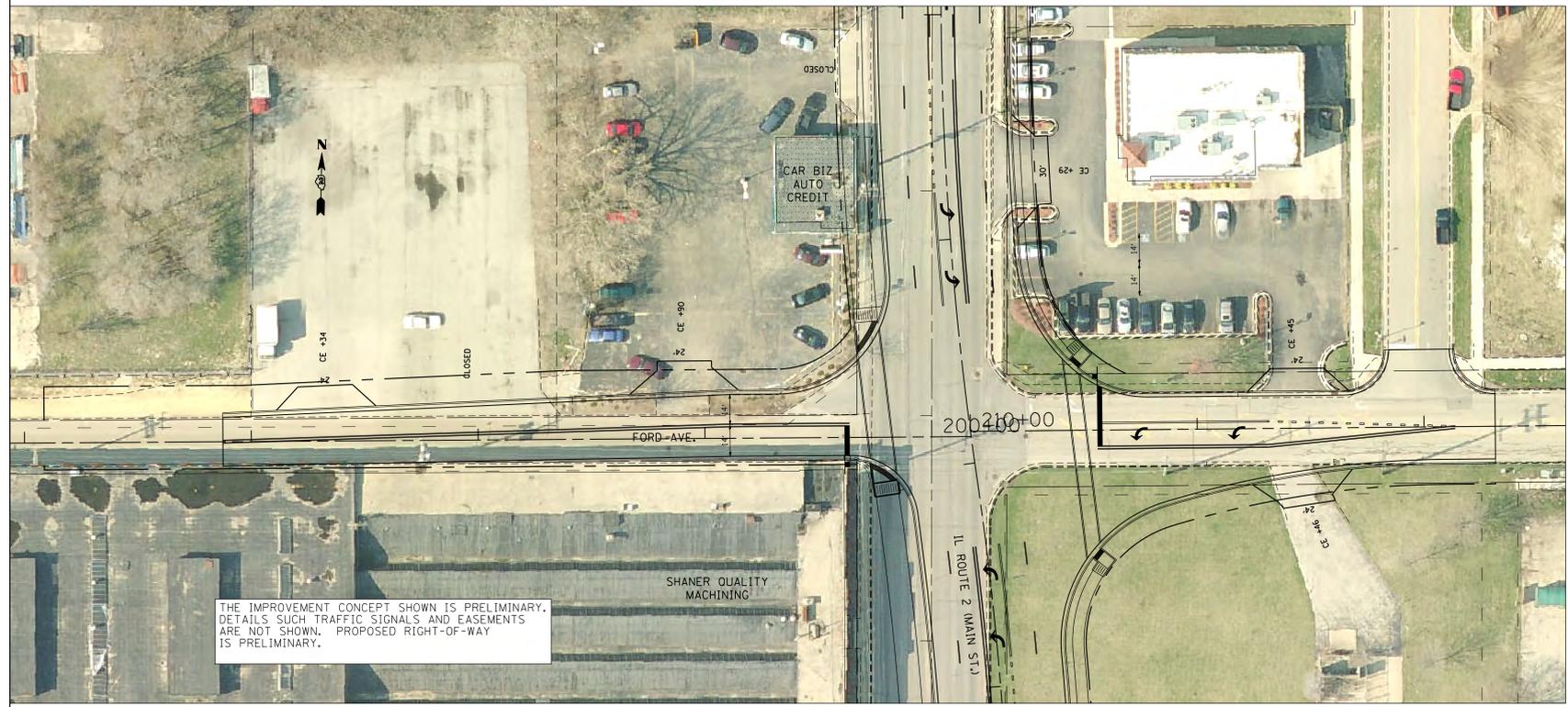


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STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

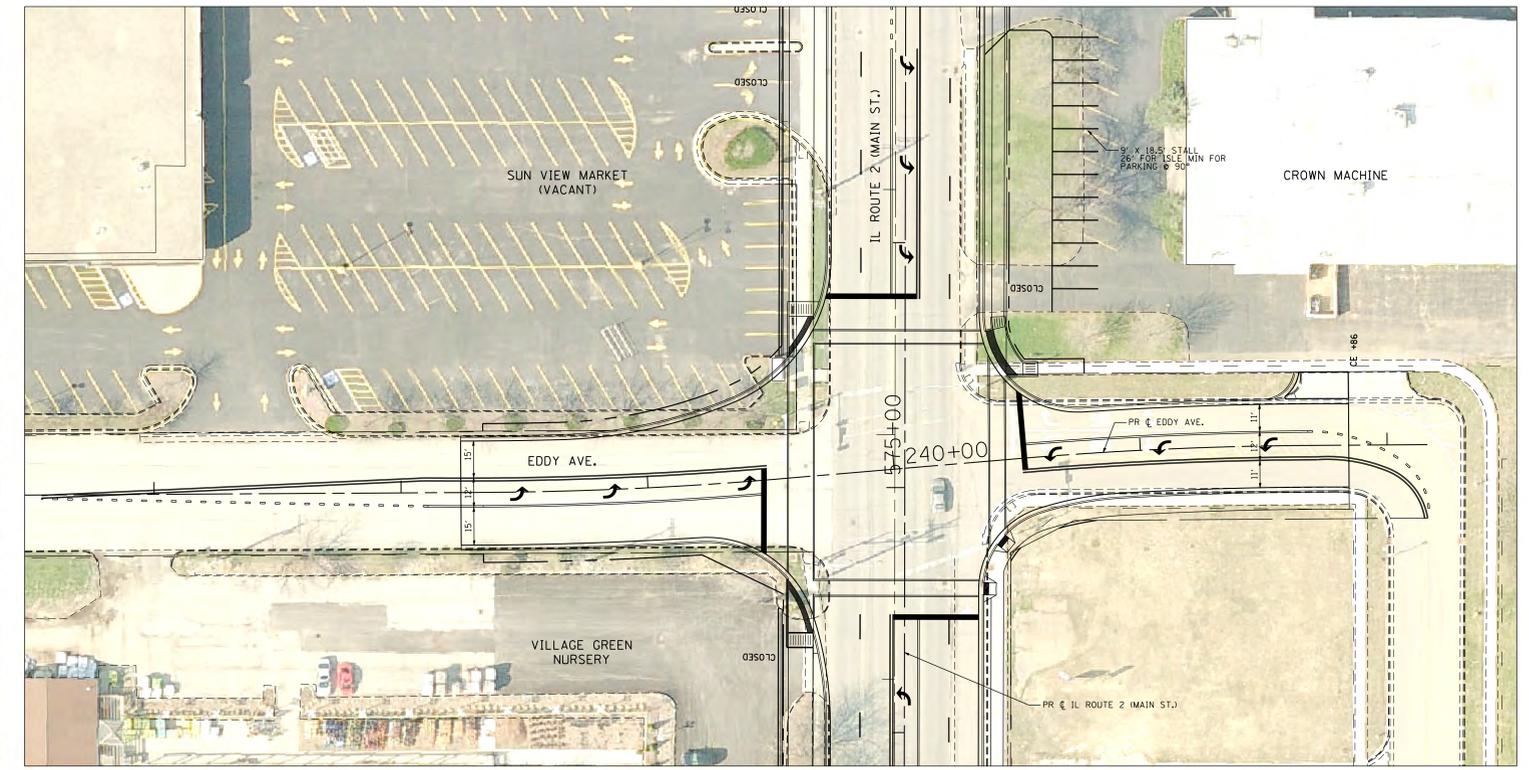
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FORD AVENUE

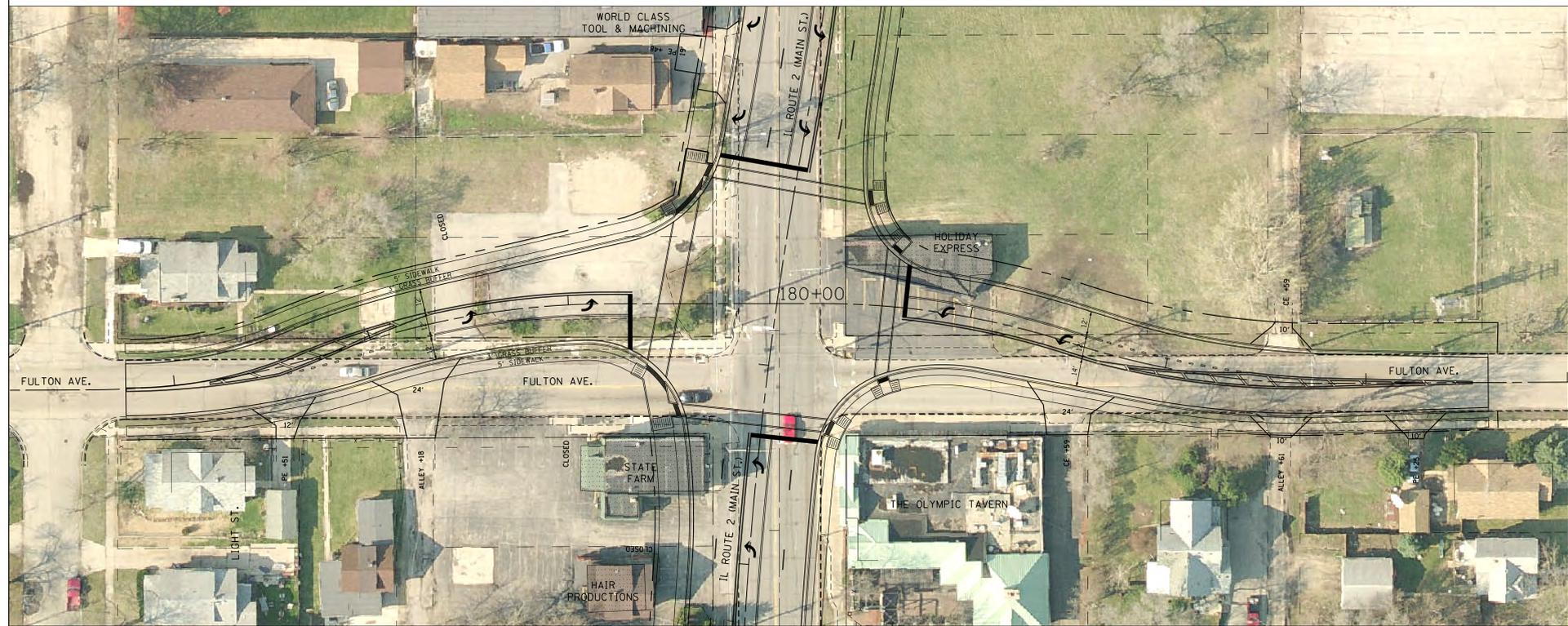


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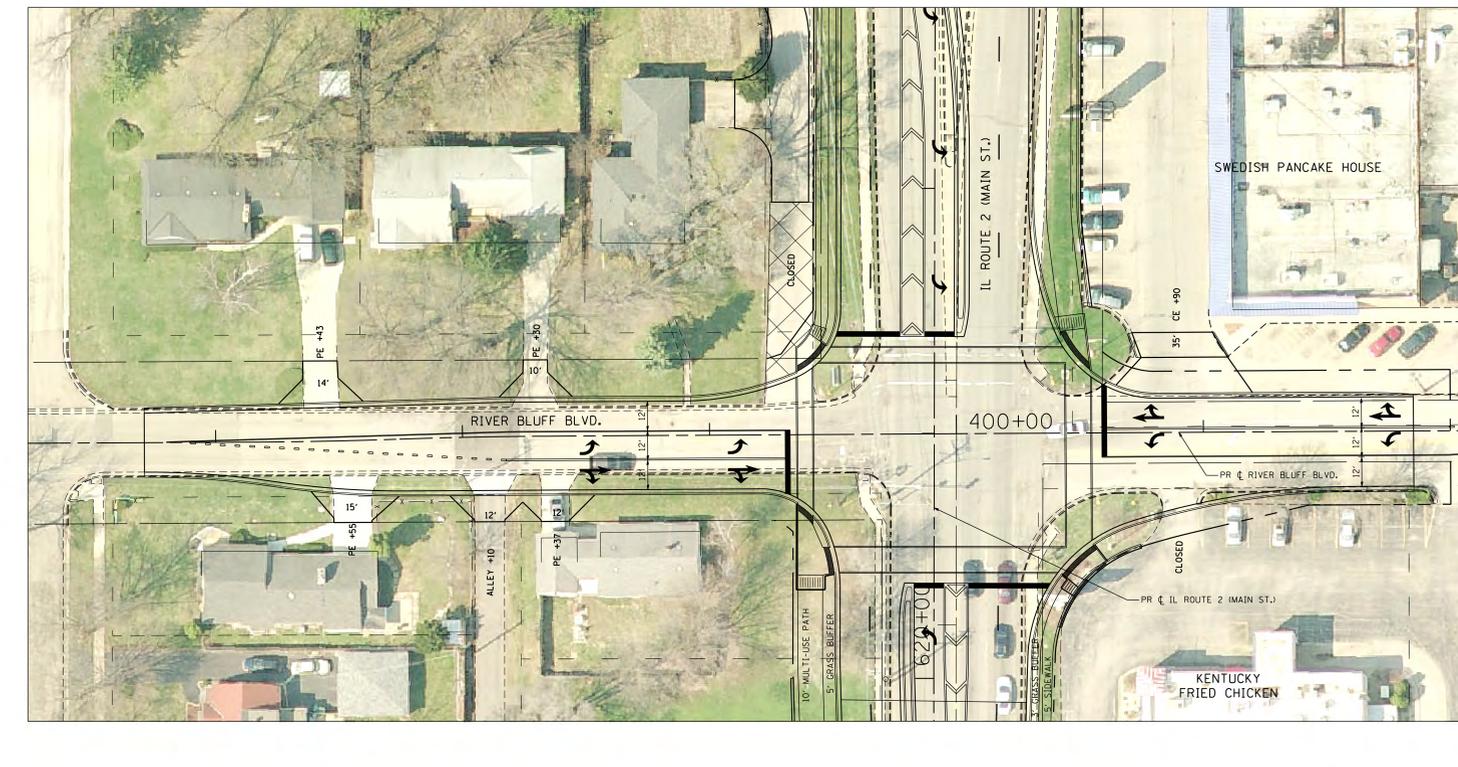
EDDY AVENUE



FULTON AVENUE



RIVER BLUFF BOULEVARD



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STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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| FORD AVENUE, FULTON AVENUE, EDDY AVENUE AND RIVER BLUFF BOULEVARD INTERSECTIONS AT NORTH MAIN STREET | | | | F.A. REF. | SECTION | COUNTY | TOTAL SHEET NO. |
| SCALE: 1"=20' SHEET NO. 6 OF 6 SHEETS STA. TO STA. | | | | FEB. ROAD DIST. NO. ILLINOIS/FEES, AID PROJECT | | | |