

Alton-Godfrey Transportation Study CAG Meeting #6 Summary



Date: October 9, 2014

Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Location: Lewis & Clark Community College – Advanced Technology Center

1. The sixth Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting for the Alton-Godfrey Transportation Study was held October 9, 2014. The purpose of the meeting was to:
 - Present the revised study alternatives proposed as Alternatives to Carry Forward (4, 5, 6, 8 and 12-3)
 - Provide an opportunity for CAG member review and comment in breakout sessions

2. The following CAG members attended the meeting:
 - Mayor Brant Walker City of Alton
 - Mayor Mike McCormick Village of Godfrey
 - Mike Stumpf Village of Godfrey
 - Matt Asselmeier City of Alton
 - Joe Domer Madison County Transit
 - Monica Bristow River Bend Growth Association
 - Lori Ehlers Alton Square Mall
 - Chief Erik Kambarian Godfrey Fire Protection District
 - Chris Norman Alton CUSD #11
 - Gary Ayres Lewis & Clark Community College
 - John Hilgert Rockgate Subdivision
 - Martin Carrow Northport Hills Resident / Business Owner
 - Robert Stephan Alton Resident
 - Joe Pflieger Savannah Trace Subdivision
 - Todd Harpole Alton Resident
 - Matt Werner Alton Memorial Hospital (attended for Rusty Ingram)

3. The following Project Study Group members were in attendance:
 - Cindy Stafford IDOT
 - Karen Geldert IDOT
 - Frank Opfer IDOT
 - Jennifer Hunt IDOT
 - Brian Macias IDOT
 - Kevin Jemison IDOT
 - George Ryan Piasa Collaborative (AMEC)
 - Steve Coates Piasa Collaborative (AMEC)
 - Jeff Strickland Piasa Collaborative (AMEC)
 - Jason Watters Piasa Collaborative (Lochmueller Group)
 - Jennifer Stines Piasa Collaborative (Lochmueller Group)
 - Brad Riechmann Piasa Collaborative (H&S)
 - Bridgett Jacquot Piasa Collaborative (H&S)

4. CAG members were provided with the following material for their project binders: meeting agenda; hard copy of the meeting PowerPoint presentation; and summaries of CAG meetings 4 and 5.

5. The meeting agenda, and PowerPoint presentation contents, were as follows:
 - a. Steps to approval of alternatives
 - b. Review of alternatives 12-1, 12-2 and 12-3
 - Changes to Alternative 12-3
 - c. Review of alternatives 1 and 2 (recommended to drop from further study)
 - d. Review of alternatives 3, 4 and 5
 - Changes to Alternative 4
 - Changes to Alternative 5
 - Breakout session
 - e. Review of alternatives 6, 7 and 8
 - Changes to Alternative 6
 - Changes to Alternative 8
 - Breakout session
6. George Ryan provided introductory remarks:
 - a. The team has revised the study alternatives that were presented at the last CAG meeting on May 21, 2014. Revisions were made based on input received from the CAG and an evaluation of engineering, traffic, environmental and socioeconomic criteria. These revised alternatives (4, 5, 6, 8 and 12-3) have been submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their approval as the study's Alternatives to Carry Forward.
 - b. The alternatives are still preliminary at this time. Following approval by FHWA, the alternatives will be assessed in the EIS document and a Preferred Alternative will be identified.
 - c. The study website address has been changed to www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/Alton-Godfrey-Study.
7. Descriptions of the alternatives were provided as shown below; breakout sessions took place as indicated. For the benefit of CAG members, printed copies of alternatives 4, 5, 6 and 8 were rolled out on the tables as each was discussed (with the exception of Alternative 12-3, which is incorporated into each north-south alternative). The tables, and CAG members at each one, were as follows:
 - a. Table 1: Brant Walker, Matt Asselmeier, Todd Harpole. Facilitator: Brad Riechmann
 - b. Table 2: Martin Carrow, Mike Stumpf, Todd Werner. Facilitator: George Ryan
 - c. Table 3: Chris Norman, John Hilgert, Monica Bristow, Martha Warford, Erik Kambarian. Facilitator: Bridgett Jacquot.
 - d. Table 4: Mike McCormick, Gary Ayres, Joe Domer, Lori Ehlers, Joe Pflieger. Facilitator: Steve Coates.
8. **Alternatives 12-1, 12-2 and 12-3**
 - e. These alternatives represent roadway improvements at the commercial area on the south end of the study area, and is incorporated into all of the north-south alternatives (4, 5, 6 and 8) recommended by the team to be carried forward.
 - f. At CAG meeting 5, CAG members concurred with the study team's recommendation that alternatives 12-1 and 12-2 not be carried forward due to estimated costs and displacements.
 - g. Alternative 12-3 has been revised as follows:

- North Alby is continuous over IL Route 3/111, as recommended by CAG members at CAG meeting #5.
- Alton Square Mall Drive is utilized for connection to all of the north-south alternatives.
- The design speed on IL Route 3/111 (between Alton Square Mall Drive and Gerson Avenue) has been reduced to 35 mph from 45 mph to reduce impacts associated with the alternative.
- Capacity at the intersection is LOS C (acceptable).
- The intersection design has been refined to reduce potential displacements estimated to be: residential – 0 (reduced from 5); commercial – 7 (reduced from 26).
- Proposed new Right of Way is six acres.
- Preliminary cost is approximately \$25.7 million.

9. Alternatives 1 and 2

- a. At CAG meeting 5, the study team recommended that alternatives 1 and 2 be propose to be dropped from further study; no CAG members at that meeting objected to the proposal. This is contingent on concurrence from the FHWA and environmental resource agencies.
- b. There were no additional comments or discussion from CAG members at tonight’s meeting.

10. Alternatives 3, 4 and 5

- a. At CAG meeting 5, CAG members concurred with the study team recommendation that Alternative 3 be proposed to be dropped from further study due to cost and potential displacements. This is contingent on concurrence from the FHWA and environmental resource agencies.
- b. At CAG meeting 5, CAG members also concurred with the study team recommendation that alternatives 4 and 5 continue to be studied, and that the North Alby Street alignment be shifted east to minimize displacements. This is contingent on concurrence from the FHWA and environmental resource agencies.
- c. Alternative 4 has been revised as follows:
 - A cul-de-sac is utilized at Big Arch Road, which reduces estimated residential displacements by 1 (from 5 to 4).
 - The North Alby Street alignment was shifted to the east, which reduces estimated residential displacements by 10 (from 18 to 8).
 - The bridge structure over the wetland area has been lengthened, which reduces wetland impact by 0.87 acres (from 1.0 to 0.13).
 - The design speed on North Alby Street has been increased to 45 mph, which currently varies between 30 and 40 mph.
 - Alternative 4 includes improvements to Tolle Lane between Humbert and Godfrey roads, however the Tolle Lane improvement is optional and could be constructed independent of Alternative 4 (and vice versa).
 - The bridge structure on the Alby Street realignment is approximately 450 feet in length, and is in this location to minimize wetland impacts. Cost of this structure is included in the alternative cost but is not broken out at this point.
 - Traffic volume in the 2040 design year is estimated at 20,600 ADT.
 - Estimated displacements (including Alternative 12-3 displacements) have been reduced as follows: residential – 12 (reduced from 30); commercial – 19 (reduced from 34).
- d. Alternative 5 has been revised as follows:

- A cul-de-sac is utilized at Big Arch Road, which reduces potential residential displacements by 1 (from 5 to 4).
 - The North Alby Street alignment was shifted to the east, which reduces potential residential displacements by 10 (from 18 to 8).
 - The bridge structure over the wetland area has been lengthened, which reduces wetland impact by 0.87 acres (from 1.0 to 0.13).
 - The design speed on North Alby Street has been increased to 45 mph, which currently varies between 30 and 40 mph.
 - Alternative 5 includes improvements to Tolle Lane between Humbert and Godfrey roads, however the Tolle Lane improvement is optional and could be constructed independent of Alternative 5 (and vice versa).
 - The bridge structure on the Alby Street realignment is approximately 450 feet in length, and is in this location to minimize wetland impacts. Cost of this structure is included in the alternative cost but is not broken out at this point.
 - Traffic volume in the 2040 design year is estimated at 21,600 ADT.
 - Estimated displacements (including Alternative 12-3 displacements) have been reduced as follows: residential – 21 (reduced from 37); commercial – 19 (reduced from 34).
- e. Prior to the breakout session, the following discussion took place:
- In response to a question about costs of each alternative, the study team reviewed the impacts and costs summary table shown on slide 21 of the presentation. The table is attached at the end of this meeting summary.
 - Q: What is the approved funding for the project?
A: *The state's current Multi Year Plan (2015-2020) shows \$110 million in funding for construction, land acquisition, and utilities and construction engineering. Approved funding is a consideration in moving forward with each alternative, however, since funding levels can change, we can't let funding alone be the overriding factor.*
- f. Breakout session comments on Alternative 4 and Alternative 5:
- Table 1
 - Alternative 5 is preferred.
 - Mall frontage / opening up the Wenzel Road interchange is a priority.
 - The improvements on Tolle Lane are a priority (grade separation over the railroad)
 - The table asked if adjustments could be made to minimize residential displacements.
 - The table likes the speed limit change at the mall.
 - The table is comfortable with the number of commercial displacements.
 - Table 2
 - Tolle Lane is a top priority.
 - Alternative 4: the table felt that this could provide better access to Macoupin and Jersey Counties.
 - Alternative 5: the table asked if the number of displacements could be reduced.
 - Alternative 5: viewed favorably because it provides multiple accesses to the north and to the LCCC area.
 - The table expressed that one disadvantage to Alternatives 4 and 5 is that it has the potential to take traffic off of Godfrey Road, which could be perceived as a negative to the existing businesses there.

- Table 3
 - Alternative 4 is preferred.
 - The Tolle Lane railroad overpass is important because of the needs of first responders and the access it would provide even while trains are passing through the area.
 - Shifting the alignment east of Alby (behind houses) is positive.
 - School buses start their routes on Alby, which means they would have to take Wesley Drive and turn left onto the new roadway into 45 mph traffic
 - Alternative 5
 - Cost is big factor (viewed negatively as high cost).
 - Maybe separate out Wenzel connection and build at later date.
- Table 4
 - The Tolle Lane improvement is necessary.
 - Alternative 5: Godfrey would need to run services (electricity, water, sewer) to the Wenzel area.
 - Concern: Alton Square Mall would lose an access (possible parking too).
 - Alternative 4 is the most favorable of the alternatives.

11. Alternatives 6, 7 and 8

- a. At CAG meeting 5, the study team proposed eliminating Alternative 7. CAG members concurred. CAG members also recommended that impacts to the planned expansion of the Alton High School athletic fields be minimized.
- b. Alternative 6 has been revised as follows:
 - Alton Square Mall Drive north of IL Route 3/111 was shifted east to avoid impacts to a tributary stream to Coal Branch Creek.
 - Improvements at the mall area were revised. This involved eliminating an east-west local connector road between Alternative 6 and North Alby. This would have resulted in improvements that are not required.
 - The alignment near the Union Pacific railroad crossing was revised, to avoid impacting the planned Alton High School athletic field expansion. This shortens the route by 0.42 miles (from 3.20 to 2.78 miles) but adds 12 residential displacements. Crossing the athletic fields could have also posed a potential Section 4(f) impact.
 - The design speed on the new alignment is 45 mph to 55 mph. At Alton Square Mall Drive, the design speed has been increased to 35 mph from 25 mph.
 - Traffic volume in the 2040 design year is estimated at 15,800 ADT.
 - Estimated displacements (including Alternative 12-3 displacements) are as follows: residential – 21 (increased from 13); commercial – 17 (reduced from 36).
 - The Tolle Lane improvement is optional and could be constructed independent of Alternative 6 (and vice versa).
- c. Alternative 8 has been revised as follows:
 - Alton Square Mall Drive north of IL Route 3/111 was shifted east to avoid impacts to a tributary stream to Coal Branch Creek.
 - Improvements at the mall area were revised. This involved eliminating an east-west local connector road between Alternative 8 and North Alby. This would have resulted in improvements that are not required.

- A cul-de-sac was added to Union School Road at Seminary Road, which eliminates residential displacements and changes the access to Union School Road.
 - The design speed on the new alignment is 45 mph to 55 mph. At Alton Square Mall Drive, the design speed has been increased to 35 mph from 25 mph.
 - Traffic volume in the 2040 design year is estimated at 9,100 ADT, which is lower than the other three alternatives recommended to be carried forward.
 - Estimated displacements (including Alternative 12-3 displacements) are as follows: residential – 1 (reduced from 7); commercial – 17 (reduced from 36).
 - The Tolle Lane improvement is optional and could be constructed independent of Alternative 8 (and vice versa).
- d. Breakout session comments on Alternative 6 and Alternative 8:
- Table 1
 - Alternative 6
 - Pro: additional interchange
 - Cons: displacements; high speed through residential area; large structure
 - Alternative 8
 - Pro: better access for high school
 - Cons: no additional connection to IL Route 255; without the Tolle Lane railroad overpass, there is no advantage for college; no advantage for fire / rescue.
 - Table 2
 - Alternative 6
 - Pro: direct route and shortest
 - Con: the table felt that the cost was relatively high; there are more displacements with this alternative than Alternatives 4 and 5 and it attracts traffic away from the Godfrey Road businesses.
 - Con: First responders feel that this alternative is not adequate if it does not include a Tolle Lane overpass.
 - Alternative 8 – no comments
 - Table 3
 - Alternative 6
 - Displacements are a big concern
 - Cons: potential noise wall behind Storyland / Savannah Trace; do not see cost benefit; no benefit to Godfrey; higher speeds with straight line
 - Pro: does move traffic; provides improved access to commercial/retail area around Alton Square Mall.
 - Alternative 8
 - Pros: low displacements; does move traffic
 - Attracts less traffic than other alternatives.
 - Benefits to Godfrey may not be as substantial as with the other alternatives.
 - Overall – prefer Alternative 4
 - Table 4
 - Alternative 6: Godfrey would need to run services (electricity, water, sewer) to the Wenzel area.

- Alternative 8: would need more services (electricity, water, sewer) along Seminary Road.
 - Alternatives 6 and 8: There was a concern expressed by the table that the Tolle Lane overpass at the railroad is only an option for these alternatives (they feel as though it should be included as part of these alternatives).
 - Alternative 6: consensus – they do not like Alternative 6 because of the relatively high number of displacements.
 - Alternative 8: consensus – they do not like Alternative 8 because it is too far removed from Godfrey.
 - The table reiterated the need for the Tolle Lane railroad overpass.
12. The study team will review these comments as the corridor evaluation process continues. Additional general comments from CAG members:
- a. Alternatives 6 and 8 are not as effective at addressing the need to improve access for emergency services (if the Tolle Lane overpass is not constructed).
 - b. The Tolle Lane improvement must be done.
 - c. Alternative 5, although it costs more, provides good benefits to Godfrey. However, Godfrey stated that services would need to be brought to the area around Wenzel Road and IL Route 255.
13. General Discussion / Action Items / Next CAG Meeting
- a. The alternatives presented and reviewed at tonight's meeting will be presented at the study's next public meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for mid-November.
 - b. The next CAG meeting will take place when the study team is close to selecting a Preferred Alternative.
 - c. The study team thanked the CAG members for their time, input and participation in the study and as members of the CAG.
 - d. If CAG members have any questions before then, they were instructed to contact Karen Geldert.
14. The meeting concluded at approximately 7:30 pm.