

# Alton-Godfrey

# TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Illinois Department of Transportation

Newsletter #1

Winter, 2012

## Early Stages of Study Underway

Will Help to Identify Alternatives to Handle Growth, Connectivity, and Circulation

**W**elcome! This is the first of many newsletters to introduce you to the Alton-Godfrey Transportation Study. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is conducting the Alton-Godfrey Transportation Study to evaluate traffic growth, connectivity, circulation, and safety conditions in the Alton and Godfrey area. This newsletter will bring you up to date on the study's progress, public involvement activities, and what you can expect in the near future.

The purpose of this preliminary engineering study, which began in early 2012, is to identify options (alternatives) that could improve transportation mobility and safety between IL Route 255 and IL Route 3 / IL Route 111 (Homer Adams Parkway). The completion of IL Route 255 will affect traffic patterns and development in the area; the study will evaluate how these changes could affect existing routes in the future. Once the changes are known, the study will help determine what, if any, roadway improvements are needed. A map of the study area is shown at right.

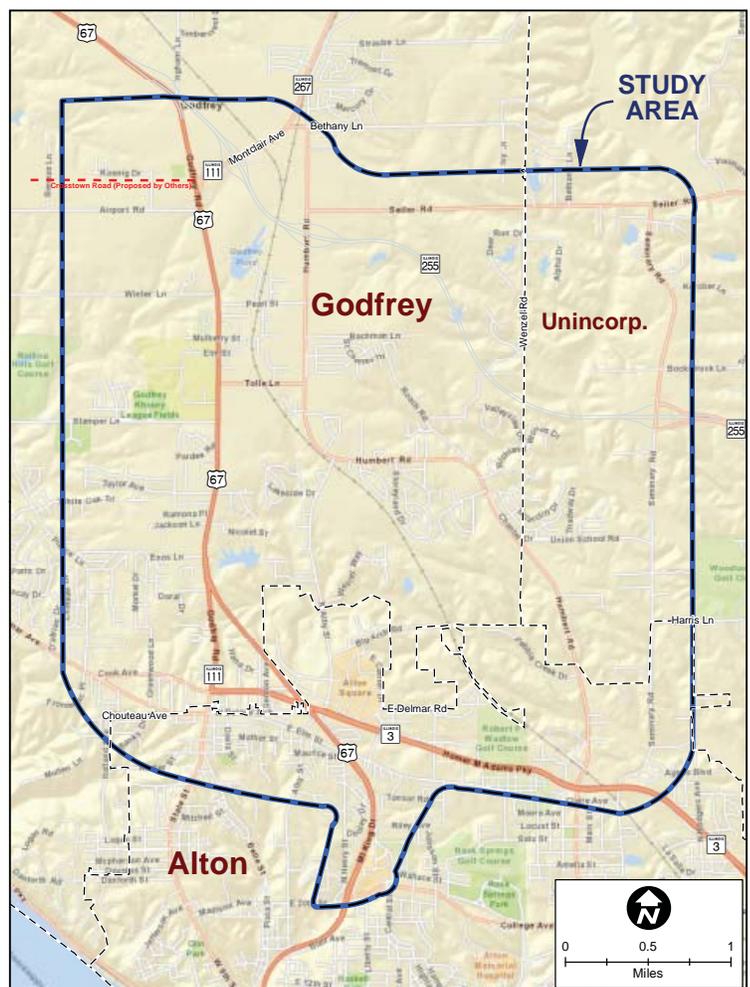
### Public Involvement and Context Sensitive Solutions

**P**ublic involvement is an essential part of this study. IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process is being utilized to engage stakeholders and the public continuously throughout the study. CSS is an approach that seeks to draw input on project decisions from a diversity of voices in the community. This input will help IDOT develop an informed solution that meets engineering requirements, addresses safety and mobility, has minimal impact on the environment, and reflects the community's values.

IDOT is implementing a variety of activities during the study to inform stakeholders and residents of the area, as well as provide opportunities to contribute comments and feedback. These activities include public informational meetings, Community

Advisory Group (CAG) meetings, and stakeholder meetings, which are all summarized beginning below.

Your input is important to the success of this study, and we encourage your participation. Visit the study website, [www.dot.il.gov/altongodfrey/home.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/altongodfrey/home.html), to get study information and provide feedback.



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of this study!**

## Stakeholder Meetings

A stakeholder is a person or organization which could be affected by the study and has an interest or “stake” in its outcome. Involving stakeholders in the study area helps IDOT understand the community’s needs for, and concerns about, our transportation system. As part of the early CSS process, with the input of community and local leaders, IDOT identified an initial list of key stakeholders and scheduled meetings to introduce the study and gather information about community issues, concerns, and future needs that should be considered by the study team. Since January 2012, over 23 stakeholder meetings have been held with Madison County, City of Alton, Village of Godfrey, River Bend Growth Association, police and fire departments, Alton CUSD #11, Lewis & Clark Community College, hospitals, major employers, and others. As the study progresses, it is expected that additional stakeholders will become involved in the project’s process. IDOT and the study team will meet with both new and existing stakeholders as needed to provide study updates and gather information about community issues.

## First Public Informational Meeting – Follow Up

The study’s first Public Informational Meeting was held May 5, 2012 at Alton High School, and was attended by 85 local residents and interested citizens. The purpose of this open-house public meeting was to introduce the study to the public and ask for input on the area’s transportation system and needs. A station was set up to solicit volunteers for the study’s Community Advisory Group (CAG).



A variety of exhibit boards and maps showed traffic, crash, land use, and environmental data, and explained the environmental study and public involvement processes. This material is available for download on the study website, [www.dot.il.gov/altongodfrey/home.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/altongodfrey/home.html).

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the study between the public and IDOT. Comments received

at the meeting are summarized as follows:

- General agreement that some transportation improvements are needed in the area
- Suggestions for improvements such as retiming signals, adding turn lanes, or improving specific intersections or roadways
- Comments referring to IL Route 255 construction, with differing or opposing opinions on impacts to local roadways when it opens
- Comments expressing concern about the state’s fiscal condition or believing the study is not needed at this time

The next Public Informational Meeting is expected to be held in 2013.

## Community Advisory Group Formed; Two Meetings Held

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) serves as a liaison between IDOT and the community by identifying transportation issues important to the community, being a conduit to share information with the community, and providing input on various elements of the study developed by the project team. The project team is a group of technical staff from IDOT and their consultant that work together to make key decisions regarding the development of this project. CAG members will express the community values to be considered with the engineering and environmental aspects at key decision-making points in the study.

Members of the CAG include local elected leaders, police and fire officials, residents, and representatives of area businesses and organizations. These individuals were selected to represent the broad variety of interests that exist throughout the study area. IDOT sent invitations to potential members, who provided additional names, and CAG volunteer



forms filled out at the first Public Informational Meeting were reviewed by IDOT. Members were then carefully selected to ensure a representative cross-section was obtained.

The CAG membership may evolve as different issues important to the community become known. Additional members may be added to help address these issues or previously unidentified stakeholder interests. If you are interested in volunteering to participate on the CAG, please contact IDOT as shown on the back of this newsletter.

Two CAG meetings have been held to date:

- August 8, 2012 – CAG members were given an overview of the study; introduced to the CAG and CSS processes; and were asked to complete a Context Audit questionnaire, which helped to identify characteristics and values important to the community.
- August 30, 2012 – The two key activities at this meeting were reviewing the results of the Context Audit and developing a Problem Statement for the study:
  - The Context Audit showed that the study should consider options that reduce congestion on local roads; improve roadway connections, access and safety; and preserve the historic and close-knit character of the area.
  - The Problem Statement is an important component of IDOT planning studies. Developed with the input of stakeholder groups like the CAG, the Problem Statement summarizes the issues that the study will seek to address. The Problem Statement becomes the backbone of the Purpose and Need statement required for the study's

### ***Problem Statement for the Alton-Godfrey Transportation Study:***

*“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 document. Our study's Problem Statement is shown in the box on this page.

Future CAG meetings are not yet scheduled.

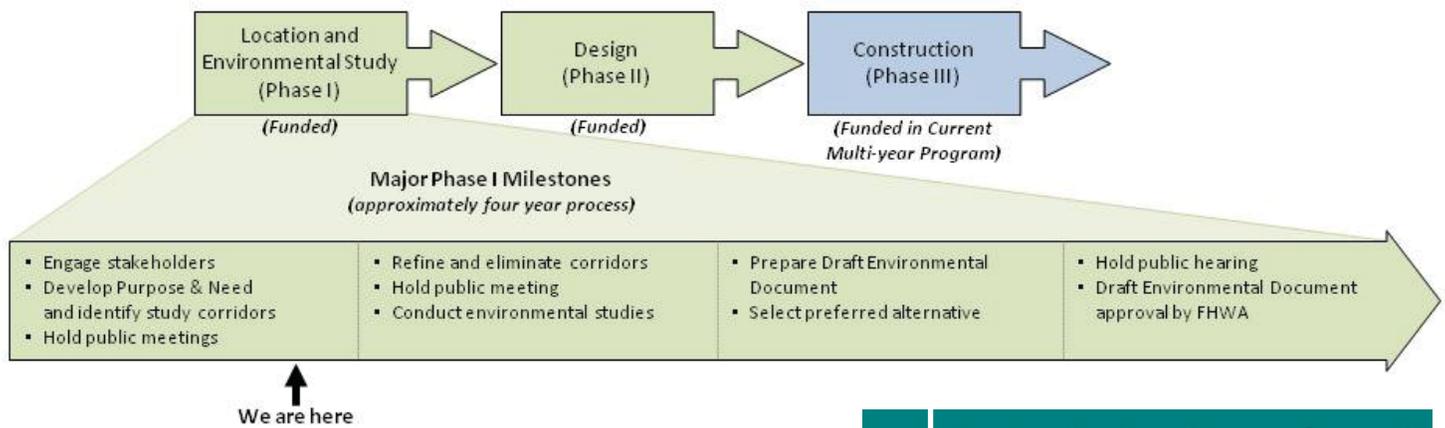
## ***Alternatives Development and the Environmental Study***

**T**he study team will soon begin the process of developing alternatives. Alternatives are potential locations where roadway improvements could be made that address the Problem Statement and demonstrate the greatest benefit to the community and the least impacts to people, businesses, existing land use, and the environment. This process involves evaluating criteria such as satisfying the Purpose and Need (see below), current and forecasted traffic volumes, crash history data, current and future land use, environmental features, and community values and characteristics.

In conjunction with the development of alternatives, the study team will prepare an environmental study, such as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA), which is required for projects of this nature. A Purpose and Need statement is a key component of the EIS or EA; it will demonstrate the reason and need for improvements. The EIS or EA as a whole will document the methodology and process used in the development of alternatives and the evaluation of potential environmental impacts, as well as the public involvement program. Near the end of the study, the EIS or EA document will be available for public review and comment.

## ***What's Next?***

- O**ver the next several months, the project study team will:
- Continue to engage the public and solicit comments and feedback
  - Develop a Purpose and Need statement
  - Develop alternatives (improvement options) and analyze traffic changes for each
  - Identify environmental considerations associated with alternatives
  - Begin work on the environmental study



**Have a question or need specific information?**

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**Get Involved and Stay Informed!**

The success of this study depends on your participation and input.

Visit our project website, [www.dot.il.gov/altongodfrey/home.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/altongodfrey/home.html), 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