



## CAG Meeting Minutes

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<b>Meeting Date:</b>	December 17, 2014 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.
<b>Project:</b>	Green Mount Road from Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 177
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) Liberal Arts Building, Room 2311 Belleville, IL 62221
<b>Purpose of Meeting:</b>	Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting No. 1
<b>Attending:</b>	Community Advisory Group Participants <u>IDOT:</u> Cindy Stafford; Matthew Meyer, Karen Geldert, Frank Opfer Wenda Southerland, Brian Macias, Jennifer Hunt <u>Consultant:</u> Cindy Watters, Jennifer Stines

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**The purpose of Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting No. 1 was to introduce the project to the CAG, describe IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, explain the role of the CAG and the responsibilities of its members, provide project information on the existing conditions on Green Mount Road from Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 177, summarize public input received at Public Informational Meeting No. 1, develop the Problem Statement for the project, and identify stakeholder interests and issues by having CAG members complete the Community Context Audit. A PowerPoint Presentation was used by the Project Study Team to facilitate this meeting (see attached). The attendance roster is attached.**

### Introduction

- 1) Matthew Meyer opened the meeting thanking the members for their participation and briefly explaining the Context Sensitive Solutions policy. Mr. Meyer also stated that the project is currently funded through all phases of the project, Phases I, II and Construction, in the Governor's FY 2015-2020 Multi-Modal Transportation Improvement Program. Self-introductions then followed.
- 2) Cindy Watters provided a brief overview of the agenda and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to the CAG, describe IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, explain the role of the CAG and the responsibilities of its members, provide project information for Green Mount Road from Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 177, summarize public input received at Public Informational Meeting No. 1, develop the Problem Statement for the project, and identify stakeholder interests and issues by having CAG members complete the Community Context Audit.
- 3) Cindy Watters stated that IDOT's definition of Context Sensitive Solutions is as follows:

*Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multimodal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities which fit into and reflect the project's surroundings – "its context".*



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- Ms. Watters further explained that CSS seeks answers to transportation problems through early, frequent and meaningful communication with stakeholders, and a flexible and creative approach to design. The resulting projects should improve the safety and mobility for the traveling public, while seeking to preserve and enhance the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of the settings through which they pass. Ms. Watters noted that rather than the engineers and designers visiting the project site a few times and then sitting at their desks and producing a set of design plans, IDOT is seeking to obtain the stakeholders knowledge and input of the project area and use this information to produce a design that solves the transportation problem for the project area and fits into the community's "context".
- 4) Cindy Watters stated that one of the first steps in the CSS process is to form the Project Study Group (PSG).
  - 5) Cindy Watters explained that the PSG consists of IDOT staff from the Bureau of Design and Environment along with staff from the District 8 office, the Federal Highway Administration staff members and the consulting firm, Lochmueller Group. It was noted that the PSG's role is to:
    - Review and analyze environmental and engineering aspects of the project.
    - Incorporate the results of these analyses along with the public's input to determine possible solutions.
    - Identify preliminary alternatives to be studied based on possible solutions, however, IDOT is the decision making authority on the preferred alternative.
  - 7) Cindy Watters explained that a CAG has been assembled to provide input on the development of a solution for improvements to Green Mount Road from Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 177. It was noted that the CAG also provides a mechanism for key stakeholders to provide direct input to the PSG during the planning process for this project. Ms. Watters further explained that each CAG member will serve as a liaison between the PSG and members of the public and the organizations they represent. In this role, the CAG member has a responsibility to communicate information discussed at CAG meetings with the organization and stakeholders they represent and to also convey feedback they receive from the groups they represent back to the PSG. CAG members were also encouraged to share their experience, local knowledge, and community interests with the PSG. Ms. Watters noted that being a CAG member does require a time commitment. At this time, the PSG is anticipating two additional Public Involvement Meetings to be held as well as three additional CAG meetings. Ms. Watters also noted that the CAG is a dynamic group and additional members could be added as the project progresses.
  - 8) Cindy Watters explained the project challenges of the CAG. Ms. Watters indicated that it is important that the CAG commit to functioning as a "whole team" and that the PSG intends to use methods designed to produce a consensus solution. Ms. Watters stated that the definition of consensus is as follows:

*"When a majority of the stakeholders agree on a particular issue, while the dissenting remainder of stakeholders agree its input has been heard and duly considered and that the process as a whole was fair."*



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Ms. Watters stated that the responsibility remains with IDOT for selection of the preferred alternative. The selection will be based on the environmental and engineering analyses and the advised input of the CAG members, other stakeholders and the public at large.

9) Cindy Watters utilized exhibits incorporated into the PowerPoint Presentation to identify the project study area and to discuss the existing conditions of Green Mount Road. The following exhibits were used to summarize the engineering aspects of the project:

- Project Study Area
- Aerial Showing Existing Conditions
- Existing Typical Roadway Section
- Average Daily Traffic (2013 and 2037)
- Levels of Service (2013 and 2037)
- Crash Location Map (2008-2012)
- Crash Summary (2008 – 2012)
- Project Time Line

Key points of discussion during presentation of the engineering aspects of the project were as follows:

- a) The project study area was defined based upon the one mile section of Green Mount Road that is under the jurisdiction of IDOT. The remaining portions of Green Mount Road to the north of Illinois Route 161 and to the south of Illinois Route 177 are under the jurisdiction of St. Clair County. A CAG member asked if the entire intersections of Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 161 and Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 177 would be included in the project limits. Cindy Stafford stated that the entire limits of these intersections will be included.
- b) The typical section of Green Mount Road, excluding the turn lanes at the three intersections, is two (2) 12 ft. lanes with five (5) ft. shoulders. Several CAG members expressed concerns that there may not be room for a roadway expansion under the existing MetroLink structure. Matthew Meyer and Cindy Stafford explained that presently the plan is to determine the problem with Green Mount Road and that once we have the problem defined we can begin to look at options to modify the existing roadway and to address the defined problem. This does not necessarily mean that there will be five (5) 12 ft. lanes through this section. Another CAG member had concerns about coordination between the IDOT and the county regarding improvements to Green Mount Road. Cindy Stafford stated that the intersections of Green Mount Road with Illinois Route 161 and Illinois Route 177 would be included in this project and that any proposed improvements would be coordinated with the county to keep the flow of the roadway between the jurisdictions as smooth as possible. Several CAG members also stated that due to the large volume of traffic, it is difficult to make turns onto or off of Green Mount Road at the entrances and driveways that are not signalized. This is the type of information that is important to be shared and potentially used in the development of the alternatives.



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- c) The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) exhibit was shown and it was explained that this is the total number of vehicles traveling in both directions at a given location on an average day. Ms. Watters stated that the 2013 ADT for Green Mount Road is approximately 19,000 and will increase to 25,000 in 2037. Ms. Watters explained that IDOT plans and designs projects for 20 years in the future with 2017 as the anticipated construction year for the project. Ms. Watters indicated that the forecasted traffic volumes take into consideration anticipated growth and development in the area. Ms. Watters commented that the 2037 forecasted traffic volumes on Green Mount Road are fairly high for a two-lane roadway. A comparison of the ADT on existing five-lane roadways located near the project area and Green Mount Road was discussed. The comparison indicated that the ADT on Green Mount Road is comparable to the ADT's on the five-lane roadways located near the project limits.
- d) Cindy Watters indicated that Level of Service (LOS) is a measure of how well an intersection or a particular movement in an intersection is functioning on a scale of A to F with LOS A being the best situation with the driver experiencing minimal to no delays and LOS F being the worst with extensive delays. Ms. Watters pointed out that Illinois Route 161 intersection is currently functioning at an acceptable LOS C. However, this intersection will fail in the future if improvements are not made and is shown as a LOS F in 2037. The Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 177 intersection is currently operating at a LOS F and the 2037 Level of Service for the Illinois Route 177 intersection remains a LOS F in the design year. There is nothing lower than a LOS F but the delay experienced by the driver will be much greater in 2037. Cindy Stafford pointed out that at the intersection of Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 177 there are fewer lanes on the legs than at the intersection of Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 161, which may be a factor in the critical LOS at said intersection.
- e) Ms. Watters then discussed the review of the crash data that was performed for the project area for the years 2008 thru 2012. During this analysis period, there were a total of 371 accidents and 130 injuries along Green Mount Road from Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 177. The predominate crash types for the entire project area were rear-end (211) and turning (111) type crashes. The intersection of Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 161 had 222 crashes (60% of the total crashes) and 87 injuries (67% of the total injuries). The intersection of Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 177 had 88 crashes (24% of the total crashes) and 26 injuries (20% of the total injuries). These two intersection combined total more than 80% of the total crashes and injuries for this one mile section of roadway.
- f) Ms. Watters further explained that the Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 161 intersection is designated as an Illinois 5% selected intersection. This designation means that this location, when compared with intersections of this type throughout the state, is within the top 5% of intersections for severe crashes of this type in the state. A further analysis was performed for this intersection, as well as the Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 177 intersection, for the cause of the crashes.
  - i. The northbound and southbound crashes were reviewed. There were 43 rear end and 31 turning type crashes. These types of crashes can be



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contributed to the large volume of traffic that results in queues (backups of the vehicles), the numerous commercial entrances (conflict points) surrounding this intersection and the current signal phasing. The northbound signal phasing has a lag left turn phase, which means the through movement is allowed to proceed prior to the left turning movement. This unanticipated movement results in vehicles proceeding through the intersection prior to their green arrow or beginning to proceed and stopping suddenly.

- ii. The eastbound and westbound crashes were also reviewed. There were 61 turning crashes and 55 rear-end type crashes. The signal phasing on these two legs of the intersection include a permitted left turn phase. This is resulting in drivers not allowing for safe gaps before proceeding through the intersection. The left turn lanes are also offset that is resulting in the drivers not having a clear view of the opposing through traffic. IDOT also conducted a speed study that indicated drivers, and in particular the eastbound drivers, are traveling higher than the posted 45 mph speed limits. Over 50% of the eastbound drivers are violating the speed limit. Matthew Meyer stated that IDOT may look into revising the signal timing to only allow protected left turn movements for the eastbound and westbound left turns. While this may reduce the number of crashes, it has the potential to increase delay and make the LOS worse.
  - iii) A further review of the Green Mount Road and Illinois Route 177 intersection was also performed. The predominant type crash at this intersection was rear-end type crashes (64 of the 88 total crashes, 73%). These crashes could be a result of the large volume of traffic that is causing extended queue lengths (backups). The IDOT speed study also indicated that drivers are violating the speed limit at this intersection. Ms. Watters also explained that the south leg of the intersection is skewed. This skew may also be contributing to the crashes. A CAG member also mentioned a dip in the intersection if you are heading northbound or southbound on Green Mount Road, and that it appears that drivers do not reduce their speed when traveling through the intersection.
- 10) Cindy Watters explained that IDOT constructs their projects in three phases. The project is currently in Phase I. Phase I is the location and environmental studies phase where the alternatives will be developed and a preferred alternative will ultimately be selected. Phase II includes the detailed design of the project and the land acquisition, Phase III is the construction. Ms. Watters stated that all three phases of the project are currently funded in the Governor's FY 2015-2020 Proposed Multi- Modal Transportation Improvement Program. Mr. Obernuefemann asked how the project could be funded if the detailed design of the project has not been determined. Cindy Watters noted that each year, IDOT reviews their program and costs and adjusts them as necessary. Cindy Stafford further explained that the programmed costs are a big picture number at this point, essentially an estimated dollar amount per mile based on similar projects, but will be refined as the project progresses.
- 11) Cindy Watters briefly discussed the public involvement activities to date. This included conducting initial stakeholder involvement meetings. Ms. Watters stated that the PSG conducted initial stakeholder involvement meetings with several local agencies including St. Clair County Chairman Kern, St. Clair County Highway Department, St. Clair County



# Illinois Department of Transportation

Township, City of Belleville, Village of Shiloh, SWIC, Metro, Belle Valley School District, St. Clair County Transit, Belleville Chamber of Commerce and Metro East Parks and Recreation District. These meetings were held to obtain their input on the project and to help identify key stakeholders who should be represented on the CAG. Ms. Watters explained that the stakeholders' concerns included the safety and mobility of Green Mount Road, the community connectivity (bike trails and sidewalks), the timing of construction and the effect it would have on the residents and commuters, and aesthetics.

- 11) Cindy Watters stated that the first Public Informational Meeting was held on April 30, 2014 at the SWIC Intramural Gym. There were 96 attendees. Ms. Watters explained that the meeting was an open house type forum with many of the same exhibits displayed as those provided in the CAG members packets. Several IDOT and Lochmueller Group staff members were present to answer the attendee's questions. The attendees were provided a handout with a comment form and were asked to submit their comments or questions. The PSG received comments from 18% of the attendees. Ms. Watters stated the following concerns were expressed:

- 45% Congestion and Safety
- 33% Drainage and Noise
- 11% Bicycle and Pedestrians
- 11% General Comments

- 12) Cindy Watters stated that one of the key steps in the CSS process is to identify the Problem Statement for the project. Ms. Watters provided the definition of a Problem Statement as:

*"A concise narrative, prepared at the outset of a project or as part of a project needs study, defining the fundamental situation or circumstance to be solved."*

Ms. Watters explained that the Problem Statement does not state what is going to be built, but is stating what the CAG perceives as the problems in the project area. A draft Problem Statement was presented and the CAG was divided into four groups to discuss and modify the problem statement. The Problem Statement agreed upon by the CAG is as follows:

**"The large current and future volume of traffic on Green Mount Road from the intersections of Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 177 results in delays and safety problems for all users (vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles) of the roadway in a developed area. These safety problems include: speed, visibility, and signal timing, among others."**

- 13) Ms. Watters then requested that each CAG member complete a Community Context Audit form for the project. The purpose of the Community Context Audit is to help the PSG identify various community characteristics that make the project unique to its residents, businesses and the public in general. The form also helps the PSG to determine what the CAG members believe the priorities should be. This information will be used to define the purpose and need of the project and assist the PSG in formulating alternatives to be reviewed by the CAG.



# Illinois Department of Transportation

14) Upon completion of the Community Context Audit Form, Cindy Watters asked the CAG members if anyone had any questions.

- Ron Henderson indicated that SWIC is proposing a new STEM building to be constructed on the northwest end of the campus. Discussions have taken place that a request to IDOT be made to have the northwest entrance permitted for public use. This entrance was closed to the general public upon an agreement executed during the college's expansion. Cindy Stafford stated that they can provide Mr. Henderson with the contact needed to start this process.
- Wade Miller indicated that the crosswalk currently located at the Metro bike crossing is a safety concern. The pedestrians and bicyclists cannot see southbound vehicles approaching and southbound drivers cannot see the pedestrians/bicyclists. George Gress with Metro stated that this crosswalk is likely still remaining due to its existence prior to the construction of the overpass. Mr. Gress stated that this should be reviewed and removed if it is no longer necessary.
- James Arhing explained that the residents on the east side of Green Mount Road were concerned with property and property value impacts that would occur should the roadway be widened on that side.

15) Cindy Watters stated that at the next CAG meeting, to be held in early 2015, the PSG will present and discuss the responses from the individual community context audit forms and present design alternatives to discuss.

16) Cindy Stafford asked the CAG members if future meetings should continue to be scheduled on Wednesday evening. All CAG members agreed that this was a good time for future meetings.

17) Matthew Meyer and Cindy Watters closed the meeting by thanking the CAG members for their attendance and participation.

## **Handouts:**

1. CAG Participation, Meeting Guidelines, CSS Definition
2. PowerPoint Presentation Handout and Exhibits
3. Community Context Audit Form

## **Exhibits/Displays:**

1. Aerial Showing Existing Conditions

## **Attachments:**

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Attendance Roster
3. List of CAG Members