

I-57 Access Study

South of Wilmington-Peotone Rd. to North of Manhattan-Monee Rd.

Newsletter No. 2

December 2025

Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in the I-57 Access Study and to everyone who attended our second public meeting on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at the Will County Fair Atrium in Peotone, Illinois. Your feedback helps us understand local priorities and guide future improvements. We appreciate the continued involvement of residents, officials, and the press as the study moves into its next stage, developing and evaluating potential alternatives to improve safety and access along I-57.

The meeting was held in an open house format featuring a variety of ways to review the study details including exhibit boards, a continuous PowerPoint presentation, and a large-scale aerial map of the study area on which meeting attendees provided comments, suggestions, and concerns. Our team connected with community members to address questions and explain study details.

The meeting was attended by approximately 91 people, and 14 comment forms were received. Some attendees elected to complete a written comment form, while others elected to speak directly to the study team members to voice their comments/concerns.

As many of the comments concerned similar issues, this newsletter will discuss those issues as well as provide an overview of other topics. Information and materials from the public meeting can be viewed on the study website at Tiny.cc/AccessI57.

Let's Review

Your input contributed to developing the Project Purpose and Need

Purpose and Need

This is a key milestone of the NEPA process, developed with input from stakeholders.

Purpose establishes why the proposed action is being pursued

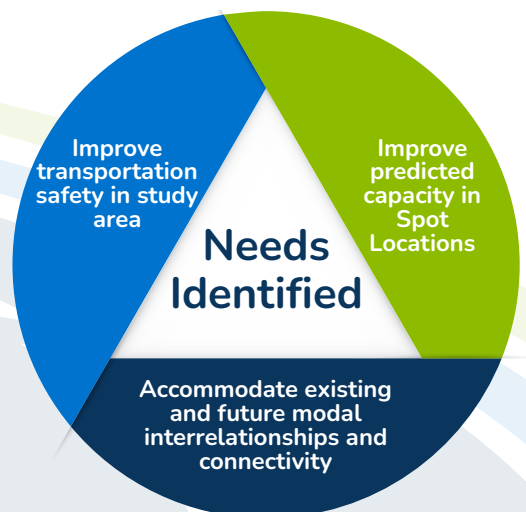
Need identifies the transportation problems to be addressed

The **Purpose Statement** establishes goals and objectives of the study, acting as a foundation for the evaluation of alternatives and the selection of the preferred alternative.

The purpose of the I-57 Access Study is to enhance transportation safety, provide adequate transportation system capacity, and accommodate projected transportation demands along the I-57 corridor between Monee and Peotone.

Needs Identified

Public Meeting #2 presented the refined Purpose and Need and continued discussion of potential solutions. Our team connected with community members to address questions, explain study details, and discuss factors for alternatives development and potential solutions to the study's transportation problems and needs.



Illinois Department
of Transportation

Your Comments and Feedback

Comments were received at the public meeting, via email, standard mail, and an online interactive survey that was open until September 26, 2025. Your feedback helps guide the next phase of the study as the team develops and evaluates potential improvement alternatives. Summaries of feedback received and responses to comments are grouped by topic below.

Safety & Operations

Safety remains the top concern within the I-57 study area, especially near the Manhattan-Monee Road and Wilmington-Peotone Road interchanges, and at several locations with higher crash rates along I-57. Residents also expressed concerns about increased truck traffic and congestion linked to nearby logistics and warehouse developments, such as Amazon facilities. Many emphasized the need for interchange upgrades and roadway improvements to handle current and future traffic safely and efficiently. Traffic concerns included:

- Increased truck traffic on local and county roads that are not designed nor designated for trucks.
- Increased traffic from Amazon's peak seasons and shift changes
- Operational and safety issues in the study area from the construction of the South Suburban Airport (SSA).
- Desire for system-level solutions such as: maintaining traffic and crash data, revisiting long-term solutions such as the Illiana Expressway, and operational improvements to support existing and planned economic development.

For the next phase of the study, the study team will begin developing a range of alternatives that address safety and operational concerns. The study team will develop alternatives and potential improvements to meet current design standards, including sight distance, roadway design, and interchange and intersection improvements, which have potential to reduce crashes and improve safety within the study area. Using the data gathered and the feedback from the public, the study team will address safety concerns around existing crash clusters at the existing interchanges and along I-57.

The team will assess existing and projected truck trips and travel patterns in the study area so proposed improvements accommodate expected increases in truck traffic due to the continued development of freight-reliant industry along I-57 and in Monee and Peotone.



Future Development & Airport

Future development, especially the SSA, was a key topic of conversation related to the project need and potential build alternatives. Concerns noted the SSA could increase traffic, including cargo trucking and freight activity, creating new operational and safety challenges in the area. With an increase in traffic, stakeholders worried additional roadway network improvements and/or a new interchange would be needed. Some residents questioned the need or timing of the SSA, citing nearby airports in Kankakee and Gary; others questioned if there was an immediate plan to build it.

The Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT's) Division of Aeronautics is currently requesting proposals from qualified teams to plan and advance development of the SSA as a separate project. This is an example of a development project that will be factored in by the I-57 Access Study team, so the proposed improvements take into account future projected traffic. As the SSA project and other nearby land development plans progress, the I-57 Access Study will consider how airport development and related growth may affect travel patterns and the need for new or improved access to I-57.

More information about the current airport planning effort is available at southsuburbanairport.com

Environmental Considerations

As the study advances, the team is developing screening and evaluation criteria that will consider environmental factors such as community impacts, wetlands, water resources, farmland, and natural areas. These criteria will be used alongside those that assess how well alternatives address the study's Purpose and Need, helping determine which options should move forward for more detailed study.

This study follows the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) process. NEPA is a federal law that requires federal funded projects to assess the effects of their actions on communities and the natural environment. During NEPA,

...continued on page 3

we use the Purpose and Need Statement for the project to identify and evaluate a range of alternatives to solve the project needs. We assess alternatives’ potential impacts on the environment in partnership with resource agencies and stakeholders. If the study indicates that adverse effects may occur, the project team will consider measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts in consultation with public stakeholders and agencies. Through NEPA, the project team assesses environmental resources such as natural habitats, forest preserves, parks, wetlands, floodplains, waterways, streams and farmland, as well as community resources such as schools, neighborhoods, land use, hazardous substances, air quality and traffic noise.

The study team is working closely with a range of relevant environmental agencies such as the Illinois Department of Agriculture and Will County Forest Preserve District for full compliance with local, state and federal regulations. As alternatives are developed and assessed, we will share our

findings with the agencies, stakeholders, and the public and incorporate comments received.

Study Process and Coordination

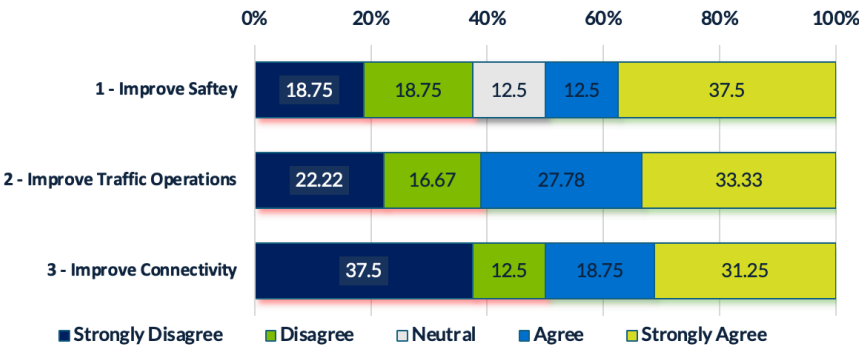
There are many studies and plans occurring in the study area simultaneously, in addition to land development plans and solar energy projects. Comments received suggested continued coordination between the I-57 Access Study team and Will County Department of Transportation (WCDOT) regarding their on-going projects and studies, including the Eastern Will County freight corridor and projects at the existing I-57 interchanges. This desire for coordination also included the South Suburban Airport developments and Monee’s land development plans.

The study team will continue to coordinate with the various agencies proposing improvements within the study area as alternatives are developed, screened, and a preferred alternative is selected.

Survey Results

Our interactive online survey ran through September 26, 2025, receiving 19 responses and 16 map markers. The survey gathered input on the study’s Purpose and Need inviting input on transportation issues and potential solutions. Most participants agreed safety and operational needs reflect local conditions, while feedback on intermodal connectivity was mixed, largely due to uncertainty around the South Suburban Airport (SSA). Some residents questioned the airport’s timeline and impact on freight activity. Future alternatives will consider the SSA and other freight-related developments within the corridor.

Needs Reflect Your Experience



**All percentages are rounded for clarity*

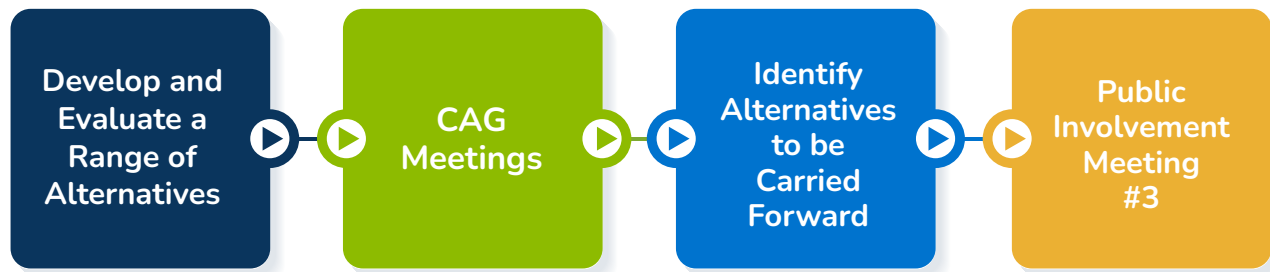


The interactive mapping activity offered respondents the opportunity to highlight areas of concern and offer potential solutions. Potential solutions include:

- Interchange improvements at Manhattan-Monee Road, including wider lanes, additional lanes for northbound entrance ramp to reduce congestion
- Interchange improvements at Wilmington-Peotone Road, including wider lanes and signalization of the ramps, and adding bicycle and pedestrian accommodations
- Expansion of truck parking at the rest area
- Widening US 52 and Wilmington Peotone Road to four lanes
- Issues with trucks navigating in the intersection of Joliet Road and 80th Avenue

Locations identified for improvements will be evaluated against the Purpose and Need and incorporated into the range of alternatives development.

Project Milestones



We will be providing interactive surveys and stakeholder meetings to present and receive feedback on the Alternatives Carried Forward.

Next Steps

Alternatives Analysis

The Purpose and Need not only establishes the goals and objectives of the study but also serves as the foundation to guide the development and evaluation of a range of build alternatives.

As the range of alternatives are developed, the input from this public meeting and the Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings will also be considered. The study team is developing screening criteria through a three-step process:



1. Fatal flaw review - is it feasible to build?
2. Purpose and Need - does the alternative meet the project needs?
3. Environmental screening - do some alternatives have higher environmental impacts?

The alternatives that remain after screening - the Alternatives Carried Forward - will be identified and presented to the public for comment. Later in the study, a “Preferred Alternative” for the project will be identified from the Alternatives Carried Forward.

A No Build Alternative, which assumes no new improvements and only routine maintenance such as resurfacing or minor repairs, will be carried throughout the study for comparison.

Stay Involved

To stay involved with the I-57 Access Study, please visit the study website Tiny.cc/AccessI57. Materials presented at the public meetings and the CAG meetings are posted following each meeting, and notice of upcoming meetings will be posted. Stakeholders interested in staying informed can sign up to receive newsletters and other notifications and updates.

Contact Us

Mail:
Illinois Department of Transportation
Bureau of Programming
Attn: Anna Kutryn, P.E.
201 W Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196

Email:
AccessI57Study@gmail.com

Website:
Tiny.cc/AccessI57



Illinois Department
of Transportation