



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Highways/Region One / District One
201 West Center Court/Schaumburg, Illinois 60196-1096

October 3, 2011

Ms. Diana O'Kelly
Chair, Public Works & Transportation Committee
Lake County Board
18 N. County Street
Waukegan, IL 60085

Dear Ms. O'Kelly,

The Lake County Division of Transportation (Lake County) and Illinois Department of Transportation (Department) have undertaken an extensive preliminary engineering and environmental (i.e.; Phase I) study process of US Route 45 Millburn Bypass project that has led to the selection of the preferred west bypass alternative (Alternative A4). This Phase I study process has provided a wealth of data and information on which this decision was based. Given the jurisdiction of US Route 45 falls under the Department, we support the efforts put forth in resolving the traffic problems at this location.

The study process was initiated with a Public Informational Meeting in March 2009, at which point, considerable stakeholder input was received with respect to the project purpose and a full range of alternatives that should be considered. This was supplemented with additional information on the project purpose and alternatives to be considered at the initial CAG meeting held in June 2009. As a result of this initial project input, a project Purpose and Need Statement and an initial range of eighteen potential alternatives were developed. Working with project stakeholders, including separate meetings with the CAG, the eighteen initial alternatives were first narrowed to nine preliminary alternatives for development and comparative evaluation. The preliminary alternatives included three east bypasses, three existing alignments and three west bypass alternatives. Further working with project stakeholders and the CAG, the nine preliminary alternatives were narrowed to three finalist bypass alternatives that were presented at the second Public Meeting in September 2010. The three finalist alternatives included A1 (a US 45 west bypass), A4 (a US 45 west bypass with the re-alignment of Grass Lake/Millburn Rd), and C4 (a US 45 east bypass). As part of the Public Meeting, estimated costs for each of the three finalist alternatives were developed, \$12.7, \$14.7, and \$13.53 Million respectively. Since the preferred alternative A4 included both north-south and east-west roadway improvements, the cost of A4 (\$14.7 Million) was greater than the other finalist alternatives.

Lake County is funding the Phase I/II engineering for the Millburn Bypass with some reimbursement from the Department. Federal funding for the Millburn By-Pass local engineering efforts was published in the Local Program for Phase I and Phase II as an HPP project that required Department/local match. Lake County has funded the Phase I study and shifted the HPP funds designated towards Phase I entirely towards the Phase II engineering efforts for this project. The Department is funding the Phase I/Phase II effort for the area outside the Millburn Bypass from IL 132 to IL 173 as part of Illinois Jobs Now! Capital Program. Regarding land acquisition and construction, Lake County's 2010-2015 Proposed Highway Improvement Program includes \$14.7 million towards land acquisition and \$16.6 million towards construction of the Millburn Bypass.

Some of the important stakeholder input obtained through the study included 1) acknowledgement of the need for a bypass; 2) the importance of overall transportation performance; 3) the location, importance, and potential impact of the project on indentified cultural and environmental resources in the study area; 4) a no adverse (i.e.; *de minimis*) impact finding with respect to a use of the McDonald Woods property along with preferred opportunities that a west bypass provides for regional trail connectivity to other Lake County Forest Preserve District properties; and 5) compatibility with transportation and land use plans in the study area.

In this regard, the Village of Lindenhurst's planning efforts over the years have incorporated a west bypass alternative, which was originally recorded by IDOT in 1995. Attached is a copy of the Department's 1995 Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) Proposed Plan which documents the location of the west bypass along with the proposed typical section, two lanes each direction. The Heritage Trails Subdivision was recorded in 1994 with lots backing to the recorded west bypass corridor along with paths and buffer areas incorporated into the east boundary of the subdivision. The Forest Trails subdivision was recorded in 1997 and incorporates the west bypass alternative as part of the subdivision plats, with the State of Illinois having purchased the designated right-of-way. Representatives from the subdivisions that were on the Community Advisory Group (CAG), commented at the CAG meetings that they were made aware of the recorded west bypass alignment when they and others purchased their residences.

The CAG established for this project has been one of the methods used to facilitate stakeholder coordination. In addition to CAG members, project stakeholders included individuals, organizations, as well as local, State and Federal agencies that have an interest in the project or that have a jurisdictional responsibility. As noted in the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that was developed at the onset of the study and discussed at several CAG meetings, the Project Study Group (comprised of Lake County and the

Department, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)) is responsible for considering this information in its entirety and making the ultimate project decisions. Based on the multiple factors needing to be considered, and the varying viewpoints/opinions from project stakeholders, the preferred alternative has been selected by the Project Study Group.

Transportation performance was an important component of the overall technical analysis results that were considered. In this regard, based on an analysis of year 2040 travel performance for all vehicles in the study area during the peak evening travel period, the west bypass Alternative A4 was shown to be comparatively superior since it had 1) the lowest cumulative travel time (99 hours as compared to 107 and 116 hours for Alternatives A1 and C4 respectively), 2) the lowest cumulative travel delay (32 hours as compared to 39 hours for Alternatives A1 and C4), and 3) the best level of service (LOS) for the main intersection of the bypass and Grass Lake Road and/or Millburn Road (LOS C as compared to LOS D for Alternatives A1 and C4). The west bypass alternatives are also most compatible with the predominant northwest/southeast regional travel patterns in the study area as discussed in the project Purpose and Need statement. These are considered by the Project Study Group as important transportation performance measures that distinguish A4 as the best of the finalist alternatives. In addition, the design constraints associated with the east bypass finalist alternative made it comparatively less desirable based on roadway alignment and intersection spacing, particularly given that US Route 45 is functionally classified as a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) roadway.

In consideration of all of this information including the data collected and analyzed during the Phase I study, the Project Study Group has determined that west bypass Alternative A4 is the clear choice in resolving the transportation issues at this location. Alternative A4 best enhances mobility for all users, best accommodates existing and future travel patterns along US Route 45 as well as Grass Lake and Millburn Roads, and is most responsive to the overall stakeholder input received. Therefore, the Department will be moving forward with alternative A4.

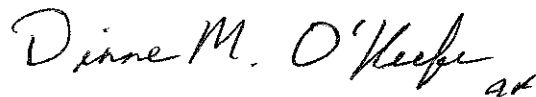
The next steps in the Phase I study process include developing preliminary engineering plans for the preferred Alternative A4 and preparing the required Environmental Assessment report that will be reviewed by IDOT and FHWA in advance of an open house Public Hearing to be held at the end of this year. Stakeholder input will continue to be sought with respect to design issues/concerns related to the preferred alternative, which was the focus of a workshop at the last CAG meeting and we plan a similar workshop for the next CAG meeting. The Public Hearing will provide an

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opportunity for interested persons to review the Phase I study documents and comment on the proposed improvement plan, as well as concept improvements envisioned along US Route 45 north and south of the bypass area from Illinois Route 132 to Illinois Route 173 that will also be addressed in the overall Environmental Assessment for this project.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or John Baczek, Project & Environmental Studies Section Chief, at (847) 705-4104.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane M. O'Keefe" followed by a small mark that looks like "ak".

Diane M. O'Keefe, P.E.
Deputy Director of Highways,
Region One Engineer

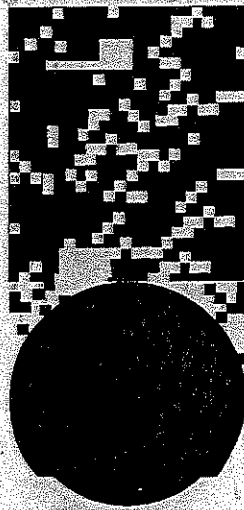
Attachments

cc: Martin Buehler, Lake County Engineer

Strategic Regional Arterial

U.S. 45

Illinois 120 to State Line Road



***Operation
GreenLight***

**Illinois Department of Transportation
February 1995**

Next Signal At
State Lake Rd.
(look ahead)

2800'

1650'

2600'

2600'

TRAFFIC CONTROL
LANE ARRANGEMENT

FUTURE ACCESS

FUTURE ACCESS

GRASS LAKE RD

FUTURE ACCESS

All Overcrossed Stop-Controlled
Unless Otherwise Indicated

McDONALD WOODS
FOREST PRESERVE

CHRYSLER BLVD

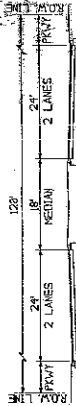
MILL CREEK RD

PRIVATE DRIVEWAY

Proposed Section Detail C-4

Legend

- EXISTING SIGNAL
- POTENTIAL SIGNAL
- SIGNAL TO BE REMOVED
- PROPOSED LANE ARRANGEMENT
- #-NUMBER OF LANES
- FUTURE RIGHT OF WAY LINE
- ADDITIONAL RIGHT OF WAY
- PROPOSED GRADE SEPARATION
- BUS STOP



U.S. 45 - PROPOSED PLAN

Prepared by CH2M HILL in association with
METRO Transportation Group and EJM Engineering

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Scale:
0 200 400 600 feet

SRA
Strategic
Regional
Alignment
Feasibility Study