



**US Route 45
IL Route 132 to IL Route 173 and Millburn Bypass
Lake County, Illinois
Section 05-00262-02-RP
P-91-666-09**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Location: US Route 45 from IL Route 132 to IL Route 173 (Environmental Assessment). US Route 45 at Grass Lake Road and Millburn Road (Detailed Engineering and Environmental Studies).

Project Lead: The Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT) is the lead agency for this project. LCDOT selected a consultant engineering team lead by Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd (CBBEL) to prepare Phase I Engineering and Environmental studies for this project. The project is being coordinated through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) District One office based on the involvement with US Route 45 and based on the \$2 million funding Earmark for this project in the SAFETEA-LU federal highway bill, and the potential use of federal funding on this project.

Communities: Village of Old Mill Creek; Village of Lindenhurst

Townships: Lake Villa; Newport; Antioch; Warren

Project Description: An Environmental Assessment is being prepared to evaluate likely long term improvement needs along US Route 45 from IL Route 132 to IL Route 173 to accommodate projected future traffic volumes in this area. Within these limits, detailed engineering and environmental studies will be prepared for the proposed improvement of US Route 45 at Grass Lake Road and Millburn Road, including a potential US Route 45 bypass. Whereas LCDOT is the lead agency for this project, all engineering and environmental documents will be reviewed and approved by IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The project is being processed as coordinated with various other environmental resource agencies through the NEPA/404 Merger process based on the presence of high quality (ADID) wetlands in the project area.

Project History: The Illinois Department of Transportation – District One evaluated a Millburn Bypass as part of a previous Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) study for US Route 45 in Lake County, which was completed in 1995. As part of the SRA study, IDOT issued a Technical Memorandum that evaluated an east and west bypass alternative, and ultimately selected a west bypass alternative. IDOT subsequently recorded the west bypass alignment and purchased one parcel of property along the recorded alignment in the Village of Lindenhurst due to pending development.

Preliminary Purpose and Need: Existing US Route 45 traverses the Millburn Historic District, a National Register location. Existing US Route 45 is one lane in each direction, with a center turn lane at the signalized intersections with Grass Lake Road and Millburn Road, which is the heart of the Millburn Historic District. Traffic volumes along US Route 45 have increased from approximately 4,000 vehicles per day in 1973 to approximately 16,300 vehicles per day (south of Millburn Road) in 2007, a 300% increase. This has resulted in substantial traffic congestion being experienced at this location on a daily basis. These traffic volumes are project to increase to approximately 20,000 vehicles per day by the year 2030.

Based on population and employment projections for Lake County and the larger Chicago Metropolitan Region, these increases in travel demand are expected to continue. Based on the existing narrow right-of-way along US Route 45 through the Millburn Historic District, it is not anticipated that capacity improvements can be provided without direct impacts to the Historic District. In addition, the Village of Old Mill Creek and the Historic Millburn Community Association (HMCA) are desirous of alternatives that reduce the travel demand through the Millburn Historic District.

Known Environmental Resources in the Project Area: Lake County ADID wetlands exist in the project area. These wetlands were mapped in the 1990's. Some development has occurred within the original ADID wetland boundaries based on inspection of the Lake County GIS database. Current wetland delineations will be performed for the project area as a lead project task. Floodplains and Floodways associated with North Mill Creek exist within the study area. The Lake County Forest Preserve District – McDonald Woods Preserve, exists along the west side of US Route 45 within the project area.

Anticipated Project Development Procedures: Notwithstanding the IDOT recorded Western Bypass Alignment and the purchased parcel of property along that alignment, the current Environmental Assessment will take a fresh look at the project Purpose and Need, and evaluate a full range of alternatives including No-Build, improvements to Existing US Route 45, an Eastern Bypass alignment, and a Western Bypass Alignment.

Stakeholder Involvement: In addition to the NEPA/404 Merger process, and as part of the overall project Public Involvement Plan, a Community Advisory Group (CAG) has been formed for this project to assist the project team (LCDOT, IDOT, FHWA) in the vicinity of the Millburn Historic District at critical project development milestones.